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Hooker, Mrs. Mary Ann (Brown)

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THE
LIFE OF DAVID,
KING OF ISRAEL.

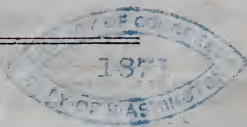
BY THE AUTHOR OF 'BIBLE SKETCHES.'

ILLUSTRATED WITH A VARETY OF ORIGINAL CUTS;
A MAP OF THE TRAVELS OF DAVID; AND AN
APPENDIX OF REFERENCES, &c.

*Written for the American Sunday School Union, and Revised
by the Committee of Publication.*

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THE
LIFE OF DAVID.

CHAPTER 1.

David's Childhood and Youth.

NEARLY three thousand years ago, there lived in Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, a very good man, whose name was Jesse. He had eight sons. His youngest son was called David, and he was born in the year of the world 2919, that is, 1085 years before the Lord Jesus Christ was born.

But before I begin the history of David, I will describe Bethlehem. It was built on a hill, six miles south of Jerusalem. On the western and southern sides, higher hills rose above it. On the northern and eastern sides, was a deep green valley. The town was surrounded by a wall, so

that the inhabitants could not go out of the city, except at the gates, which were placed at the end of some of the principal streets. These gates were open in the day time, and shut at night. The houses were built of stone, with flat roofs. A railing was placed around the roof of each, so that the family who lived in the house, could walk and sit there in the evening, when the cool west wind blew from the sea. Some of the houses had pleasant gardens around them, and were shaded by tall spreading trees. After a very hot day, Jesse and his sons would often walk on the roof of the house, enjoying the cool air and the pleasant prospect:

The weather in Palestine is very different from what it is in New England, but is in some respects like the climate of South Carolina and Georgia. The spring there begins in February. Yes, in February,

when the people in our northern states are looking out upon fields covered with snow, and wrapping themselves in fur, David, who kept his father's flocks, used to lead them out to green pastures, by the side of still waters, in the pleasant valleys below Bethlehem. Nothing could be more delightful than the whole season from February, till June. The latter rains, which were falling till the end of March, caused the flowers to appear on the earth, and the fig-tree to put forth her green figs. Lilies, hyacinths, geraniums and tulips, with a multitude of other plants, never seen here except in gardens and green houses, were thickly scattered over the hills and valleys. The accacia and other flowering plants hung their delicate wreaths over the precipices on the tops of the mountains, where the wild goat leaped from rock to rock, and the eagle rose screaming from

her nest. The steep sides of the mountains were cut into terraces or steps, covered with earth, and planted with vines, grain, and fig-trees. Here was a garden, with the richest fruits and flowers; there was an olive yard, offering a cool and refreshing shade. Under this bower, you might shelter yourself from the scorching beams of the sun at noon day; on that height, you might catch the cool breeze of evening, and look out upon the hills and valleys of Judah, and the waters of the Dead sea, which lay beyond.

On the sloping sides of the hills, the vineyards were unclosing their silvery leaves, and filling the air with the perfume of their blossoms. Groves of palm trees grew up by the side of peaceful rivulets in the valleys, their tall straight trunks forming a beautiful colonnade, and their spreading leaves at the top, shutting out entirely

the rays of the sun. Herds of cattle and flocks of sheep were grazing in the meadows; a multitude of birds sung in the groves; the conies peeped out from their holes in the rocks, and the graceful antelope bounded along the plain. Wherever the eye turned, it beheld a freshness and beauty, marking out this, as the land that Jehovah had blessed; "a land of brooks of water, of fountains, and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley and vines and fig-trees and pomegranates; a land of oil olive and honey."

David often wandered amidst such pleasant scenes as these. The beautiful and sublime works of God were all around him. And he learned a great deal by studying these works. Many people seem to think that there is no way of gaining knowledge except by reading books. If it were so, David would never have become a great

man, for he had not many books to read. But there are other ways of obtaining useful ideas. One of these ways is by carefully observing the things that God has made, and thinking about them. There are plants, and animals, and minerals, and the vast worlds which roll, in grandeur, all around us. David examined them all, and learned much of their nature and uses. The Holy Spirit had changed his heart, so that he loved God, and loved to see the wisdom and power that are shown in the works of God.

When David was seated on the grass with his sheep feeding around him, he had many thoughts which he would put into beautiful verses. These verses, in which he thanked God for his goodness, and praised him for his greatness, David would sing during the lonely hours of the day. And often at evening, when the moon appeared

above the eastern hills, and the stars glimmered in the heavens, the sweet sound of his harp was heard by the weary labourers, who were slowly returning from their fields to Bethlehem. In this way David became a celebrated poet and musician.

But his most interesting employment was reading the word of God. We may imagine him resting upon the grass under a



tree, with the book of the law spread out before him. It contained the five books of

Moses, the book of Joshua, and perhaps the book of Judges. It was written with a pen upon a long piece of cloth or parchment that was rolled at each end upon a stick, as we often roll up maps. We know that David frequently studied this book; for in his Psalms he several times relates the history that is contained in it. And he often tells us how much he was delighted in reading and thinking about it. "O how I love thy law; it is my meditation all the day. How sweet are thy words to my mouth; yea, sweeter than honey to my taste."

Thus David became acquainted with the word of God. He tried to keep his commandments. Morning, noon and evening he prayed to God to give him the aid of his holy Spirit. God heard his prayers, and he became humble, pious and obedient.

By so carefully studying the Holy Scrip-

tures in his youth, David gained much wisdom. He was afterwards distinguished for his great skill in ruling the people of Israel. And how did he become so wise? He tells us in the 119th Psalm. "I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation."

If David learned so much by reading the Bible when he was young, the person who is now reading this book may become wise and prudent by doing the same thing. David had but a small part of our Bible, as only a little of it was then written. Many books were added to the Old Testament afterwards. God has since directed the whole of the New Testament to be written. The Bible is now completed and put into your hands, not written on a piece of parchment, as David's was, but printed, so that it is much easier and pleasanter to read it. If you wish to become wise, you

must read this book often; and when you have leisure, you must think about it, and ask God to help you to understand it: for you will not become better or wiser by reading it, unless God gives you his assistance and blessing: but we will go on with our history.

There are many lions in Palestine, and they often make their dens on the banks of the river Jordan, in flat marshy places, which are thickly covered with reeds and shrubs. On this account the lion is called by some of the Hebrew poets, the “wild beast of the reeds.” From these dens they go out round the country looking for food for themselves and the young lions, which they leave behind them: and they used to say in that country, that the devil was like a roaring lion, going about seeking what he might devour. The lion, you know, is the most terrible of all animals,

fierce and strong, and the conqueror of all the beasts of the forest. One day, when David was watching over his sheep, a lion that was hungry came up to his field, in search of food. Creeping softly along, like a cat when she sees a mouse, he suddenly gave a terrible leap, and seized upon a lamb. I am afraid the lamb had strayed too far away from the shepherd and his flock, as some boys and girls are apt to do from the kind care of their parents, and the good advice and direction of a merciful Saviour. David saw it, and running after the lion, struck him with his staff. The lion dropped the lamb, and, growling with rage, turned towards David. His mane rose up upon his head and neck; his eyes flashed like fire, and he gnashed his teeth. He was going to spring upon David and tear him in pieces. But God helped David to defend himself against the lion

with his staff. David killed the lion. After he had killed the lion, he took up the lamb very carefully and carried it back to its mother. At another time, David killed a bear in the same manner, and saved his flock from destruction. David knew very well how it was that he came to conquer these two monsters, who were so much stronger than he was; and he knew too who it was that delivered him out of the jaws of the lion, and out of the paws of the raging bear; and when he told about it, he did not forget to tell who it was who gave him strength and courage.

CHAPTER II.

Samuel anoints David to be King.

THE Israelites were now settled in the land of Canaan. God had promised them this land when they came out of Egypt. He told them, when they came to this country, that they must drive out the people who then lived in it, because they were very wicked. The Israelites fought against the Canaanites and conquered them; but they permitted some of them to live in different parts of the land. This country was east of the Mediterranean sea, and extended from mount Lebanon on the north, to a line drawn from the southern part of the Dead sea to the Mediterranean on the south. The river Jordan ran through the middle of the land. Saul was, at this time, king over the Israelites. But he was a

wicked man. He had been disobedient to God, and God had determined that he should not be a king much longer. God commanded Samuel to go to Bethlehem and anoint one of the sons of Jesse as king. It was a custom among the Israelites, when they had chosen a king or a high priest, to pour upon his head an ointment of olive oil and fragrant spices. David, a good while afterwards, spoke of this custom in the hundred and thirty-third Psalm.

“Behold, how good and pleasant it is
For brethren to dwell together in unity !
It is like the precious ointment upon the head,
That ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard,
That went down to the skirts of his garments.”

When any person was anointed, it showed that he was chosen by God to perform very important duties. Samuel was afraid to go to Bethlehem, because he knew that if Saul heard of it, he would be very angry, and perhaps kill him. But God told him

to take an animal and offer it in sacrifice at Bethlehem, and call Jesse to the sacrifice. God had commanded that sacrifices should be offered in the court of the tabernacle, before the ark. But since the ark had been removed from the tabernacle at Shiloh, Samuel, who was a good man and a prophet, used to go into the different cities and offer sacrifices. Samuel went to Bethlehem, and invited Jesse and his sons to the sacrifice.

Jesse's oldest son, Eliab, was tall, and had a noble countenance. Samuel looked at him with much pleasure, and said to himself, "this is the man whom God hath chosen." But God instantly told Samuel that he was mistaken; for though Eliab was very handsome, he was not fit to be king over Israel. Samuel had judged too hastily, for Eliab's good looks would not help him to rule over the Israelites, or to

command their armies, or to set them a good example. A good mind and a good heart are much better than a fine figure and beautiful face. God told Samuel that men are in danger of being deceived, because they judge of persons by their outward appearance; but that God can not be deceived, for he looked directly on the heart, and knows the character and feelings of every one.

Jesse then made six more of his sons to pass before Samuel; but Samuel told him that God had not chosen any of them. He then asked Jesse if these were all his children. Jesse replied, that he had another son who was younger than his brothers, but he was in the field with the sheep.

Samuel said "send for him, for we will not sit down to the feast till he comes." Jesse sent for David and he came immediately, for he was accustomed to obey his father.

When David came in, Samuel saw that he was very fresh and beautiful. He was dressed in a long loose garment, which was tied around his waist with a girdle. He was about eighteen years old. God said



to Samuel, "arise, anoint him, for this is he." Then Samuel took the horn and poured the oil on David's head. From that time God helped David to prepare himself to govern the Israelites.

After Samuel had returned home to Ramah, David went back into the field to watch over his flocks. He had learned from the prophet that he was to be, at some future time, a great king. But this did not make him discontented with his humble employment. Many young persons would have been idle and dissatisfied, and impatient to obtain the promised blessing. It was not so with David. He went quietly to his work, and waited with patience till God should perform his promise, and raise him to a higher place in the world. Perhaps he was wise enough to know that great riches and great power do not always make people happy, and that he might have as much enjoyment among the fields and groves of Bethlehem, as when made king over all Israel. At any rate he wished to do what was his present duty, and to prepare himself for any future du-

ties which God might direct him to perform. He did not indulge himself in vain thoughts about being a great king; for he found his happiness in loving and serving God: as it is beautifully said in one of the psalms, "whom have I in heaven but thee; and there is none upon the earth that I desire besides thee."

In a little time king Saul became melancholy and disturbed in his mind. He knew that he had displeased God. Samuel had informed him that, to punish his disobedience, God would not permit his son to be king after him. This made him unhappy. Besides, his conscience troubled him because he had sinned and lost the friendship of God. His courtiers saw that he was gloomy, and wished to think of something that would amuse him. They advised him to find some person who could play well upon the harp. He directed

them to seek for such a person. One of them told him that he had seen a son of Jesse, at Bethlehem, who had great skill in music, and was brave and prudent, and a friend of God. Then Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, "send me David, thy son, who is with the sheep." Jesse immediately sent David to Gibeah, in the tribe of Benjamin, where Saul lived, with a kid, some bread, and a bottle of wine. The bottle that contained the wine, was made of the skin of some small animal sewed up tight, except at the neck, where the wine was to be poured out:* then it was tied with a string.—It was a custom in Israel, as it is in all eastern countries, to carry presents to kings and great men. No one could visit them without bringing a present.

* See an engraving of an eastern bottle, in *Evening Recreations*, published by the American Sunday School Union, Part 2, page 77.

Saul soon became very fond of David, for he was a young man of amiable temper, very kind and affectionate, with a fine noble spirit, generous and brave. Saul observed all these traits in his character, and made him his armour-bearer. It was the duty of the armour-bearer to carry the armour of the king when he went out to battle, and to be always near him, that he might deliver the king's orders to the other officers of the army. He was a young man who feared the Lord, and therefore the king might safely make him his most intimate friend, and trust to him his life and all his secrets. David remained a good while with Saul, and used to play on the harp before him when he was melancholy. But when Saul did not need him any longer he willingly returned to his father; no doubt far happier with his parents and brothers than among the great men about

the king, who are generally a wicked set of people, who think more of a gay life than of serving that God who has blessed them so greatly ; a father's house is a pleasant retreat for a virtuous son.

CHAPTER III.

David kills Goliath.

SOME time afterwards, the Philistines gathered together their armies to fight against the Israelites. The Philistines lived in the country of Philistia, which was west of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and on the borders of the Mediterranean sea. They were idolaters, and worshipped an image called Dagon. They had often before fought against the people of Israel and oppressed them greatly. Their army was encamped on a hill on one side of the valley of Elah, and the army of

Israel was on another hill on the opposite side of the valley. This valley has sometimes been called the vale of Terebinths. It is therefore probable that many Terebinths grew there. These large fine trees are common in Palestine, and are green throughout the year.

There was, in the Philistine army, a giant named Goliath. He lived in Gath, one of the principal cities of Philistia. He came every morning and evening into the valley between the two armies, and defied the Israelites to send out a man who could fight with him. His appearance was terrible. He was ten feet high. His helmet or cap was of brass. A coat of mail of shining brass, weighing one hundred and fifty six pounds, covered his body, and he wore greaves, which were a kind of boots made of brass. The spear which he shook in his hand, is compared to a weaver's

beam ; its sharp steel point weighed nineteen pounds. His shield was carried before him, by his armour-bearer. It was made of the skin of an ox, adorned with brass. In the centre was an ornament of brass called a boss. When he had come near to the Israelites, he called out, and in a haughty manner commanded them to choose a man from among them to fight with him in front of the army. He proposed that the quarrel should be decided in this way ; and that if he conquered the Israelite, all the people of Israel should become the servants of the Philistines. It was common among ancient nations to settle disputes by what was called single combat ; that is, by two persons fighting with each other. Each of these persons was chosen by one of the parties engaged in the dispute, and they were called the champions of their respective parties.

When Saul and his soldiers heard the words of the giant, they were much alarmed. They were not obliged to accept of his proposal, and it was very foolish to be so much afraid of him. But Saul, though he had formerly been brave, had lost his courage since God had forsaken him. During forty days Goliath came every morning and evening before the army of Saul, and threatened and defied them.

This field of battle was a few miles north-west of Bethlehem. Yet all was quiet there, and David peacefully watched over his sheep and sang the praises of God. We cannot suppose that he was unconcerned about the success of the war. He thought much of those idolaters who had come to take away the liberty of the people and destroy the worship of God. He prayed that their wicked designs might not be accomplished.

Many days passed away and Jesse had not heard from his three eldest sons who were in the army with Saul. He became anxious to know if they were well, and told David to go to the camp and carry them a present, and inquire after their welfare. So David rose early the next morning, and took some parched corn and ten loaves of bread to carry to his brothers. He also took a present for the captain under whose command they were, and set out to go to the camp of Saul. He soon came near the two armies.

It was a splendid sight. A multitude of tents were arranged in regular forms, on the tops of the two opposite mountains. Farther down on their sides, the two armies were drawn up ready for battle. The men stood in long lines, some of them with spears and some of them with bows and arrows; and as the morning sun shone

upon their polished armour, the sides of the mountains were covered with a blaze of light. Below them was the valley, with its pleasant groves and murmuring brook. As the young shepherd approached the army of Saul, he heard a deep long shout that was echoed from rank to rank, and he knew that they would soon begin the fight. He therefore ran quickly to find his brothers and delivered his message to them.

While David was talking with his brothers, Goliath came, as usual, in front of the Hebrew army, and in an insulting manner demanded a champion to fight with him. As soon as the Israelites heard his voice, they were so terrified that they broke up the regular line in which they had stood, and fled in confusion towards their camp on the top of the hill.

David was astonished to see his countrymen, who were under the protection of

God, behave in such a way. He said to some men who were near him, who is this idolatrous Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God? What reward will be given to the man, who shall kill him and take away this reproach from Israel? The men answered him that king Saul would allow the man who should kill Goliath to marry his daughter, and would give him great riches and bestow many honours upon his family.

Eliab was angry with his brother David, for making these inquiries. He had seen the prophet anoint David, and had good reason to think that, at some future time, his brother would become great and honourable. Eliab should have rejoiced at the kindness shown to his brother. But he was so selfish and wicked as to be displeased because David was chosen to be a king. He wished to be chosen

himself. He envied his brother. This was very wrong. Brothers and sisters should love each other, and rejoice in each other's happiness. Eliab spoke harshly to David, and accused him of coming there out of pride, and a desire to see the battle. This was unkind, when David had come to see him, and bring him a present from his father. But David answered him mildly, and then turned to some other persons who were present, and asked them about Goliath. The people began to think, from his inquiries, that he was willing to fight with Goliath, and they went and told Saul, and Saul sent for him.

When David came to the king's tent, Saul did not recollect him, though he had lived so long with him at Gibeah. David told the king that none of the people need be afraid of Goliath, for he would fight with him. But Saul replied that David

was too young to fight with the giant who had been accustomed to war from his youth. David then said to Saul, "thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered *it* out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught *him* by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. David said moreover, the Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, go, and the Lord be with thee."

Saul seeing the boldness of David and that his trust was in God, "armed David with his armour, and he put a helmet of

brass upon his head ; and also he armed him with a coat of mail." And David girded the sword of Saul on his armour, but he found the whole armour very heavy and inconvenient, because he was not so large a man as Saul, who was very tall indeed, being about a head higher than almost any one else. He took it all off, and with his staff and sling in his hand, went down into the valley : a sling is an instrument for throwing stones, used in ancient times either in war or in hunting. It is made of a small piece of leather which holds the stone, and a string is fastened to each end of the leather, and the stone is thrown by whirling it round in the sling and suddenly letting go one of the strings. It goes with great force, and after a little practice can be thrown very straight. When he came to the brook, he chose five smooth stones out of it, and put them in the

bag that hung from his girdle, and went to meet the Philistine. When Goliath saw a young man, with a fair skin and ruddy complexion,—not like the sun burnt skin of the hardy soldier,—a lad in the dress of a shepherd, with a staff in his hand coming up to him, he looked scorn-



fully at him, as if to find some one to fight with; and then turning his eyes upon, David, he said to him, am I a dog, that thou

comest out to me with staves? And then he began to curse David, as wicked men often do when they are angry. "Come to me," said he, "and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field." And David replied, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the LORD OF HOSTS, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into my hand, and I will smite thee and take thine head from thee; and I will give the bodies of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands." As David and Goliath

came near each other, every eye was upon them, and every heart beat with fear and hope. David put a stone into his sling, and with steady aim, and with all his might, he hurled it at the proud man who had defied Israel's God.

The stone flew with such force that it entered the forehead of the giant, and he instantly fell dead upon the ground. Loud shouts arose from every part of Israel's camp, and David running up, drew the giant's sword out of its sheath, and with it cut off the head of his lifeless body. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled towards their own country. And the Hebrew army shouted and pursued their enemies into Philistia to the cities of Gath and Ekron, almost to the shores of the Mediterranean sea. David took the armour of Goliath and kept it for himself; not to wear, but as

the evidence of his victory. It was a custom, in the wars among ancient nations, for the person who killed another, to take off his armour and keep it as a memorial of what he had done.

When David was gone out to battle, Saul asked Abner, his general, who the young man was,—for he had forgotten him.—Abner could not answer this question; but after the battle, he brought David with him to the tent of the king. King Saul said to him, “whose son are you, young man?” and David said, I am the son of thy servant Jesse, the Bethlehemite.

It seems a little strange that Saul did not recollect David. But it was, perhaps, several years since he had seen him. There were many servants and officers about the king in his palace at Gibeah, and many of the people were constantly coming to see him about the business of

the country. Kings cannot be expected to recollect faces as well as those who have but few acquaintances. Besides, Saul's mind had been troubled and perhaps in some degree deranged, as he was subject to fits of melancholy, and even of madness.

A sinful life is very apt to spoil the mind, even of sensible men, especially if they have much trouble.—David had grown older too, and was altered in his appearance.

Jonathan, the son of Saul, was in his father's tent when David came in. He had seen the courage and confidence in God which David had shown, in going out to fight with the enemy who was feared by them all, and he saw the modesty of his behaviour after he had killed Goliath. Jonathan admired David's bravery, his skill, his modesty and his faith in God, and he loved him as his own soul; for the cha-

racter of David was not only excellent, but very much like his own. Jonathan was brave and generous and pious, and so was David; and seldom has the world seen a prince of such great excellence as the son of Saul. As soon as they were alone, Jonathan and David agreed that they would always be sincere friends to each other, for each of them saw something in the other which he admired and loved. And Jonathan took off the rich robe that he wore and gave it to David, and he gave him his beautiful girdle, and his sword, and his bow.

This may appear strange to my young readers, because it is not customary to do so in this country. But in Palestine, and other places in the east, it was common to give away garments. Sometimes when a king made a feast he gave garments to all the guests. It was thought a favour

for a king or great man to give to an inferior, any garment which he had worn. Jonathan was a prince who had much power and influence.—David felt greatly honoured by his kindness, and immediately put on the garments that Jonathan had given him and wore them. Saul told David that he must not return any more to Bethlehem, but must go home with him to Gibeah. He made him one of his captains, and for a little while treated him kindly.

CHAPTER IV.

Saul is jealous of David, and tries to kill him.

PREPARATIONS were now making for the victorious army to return homeward. As they passed through the cities, the people came out to meet and congratulate them.

When the people of any city of Israel wished to do honour to a king who was about to pass through their city, the men used to go out of the gates to meet him. They were accompanied by a procession of young women who were dressed in white, their long hair braided and adorned with gold and pearls. They wore veils, and carried instruments of music in their hands. While they played upon these they kept time with their feet to the music, and sung a song that was composed on purpose for the occasion. Flowers and branches of trees, with rich carpets and garments, were spread on each side of the road. The companies of young women that conducted Saul and his army into the cities through which they passed, sung a song in praise of Saul and David. The chorus of the song, or that part repeated at the end of every verse was, "Saul has

slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands."

This was praising David much more than Saul, which was right, when David had killed Goliath whom Saul had feared so much. But Saul was very jealous, and could not bear to hear any body praised but himself. It is natural for every person to be selfish and wish to have the most and best of every good thing; and only those who pray to God and try to feel right, can subdue this feeling.

But perhaps selfishness was stronger in Saul than in most others, because he was a king, and accustomed to be flattered. A king has many wicked people about him who wish to be made rich or honourable. In order to persuade the king to give them money, or place them in high stations, they are willing to praise him more than he deserves to be praised. This is called flattery,

and I suppose that Saul had many people around him who flattered him every day, till he could not enjoy any thing else. They did not do this because they loved him. No, if they had wished to do him good they would have acted very differently. But they tried to please the king that they might obtain some benefits from him.

There are some people in the world who are so foolish as to flatter children. I hope none of the children who read this book, are so foolish as to like to be flattered. You see what effect it had upon Saul. It made him so selfish, that he could not bear to see any body loved or admired but himself. I have seen some children, yes, and some grown people too, who would look quite disturbed if another person was praised. This shows that they did not love their neighbour as well as they loved themselves.

Instead of driving away these wicked thoughts from his mind, Saul indulged them from day to day, till he began to hate David and to wish he was dead. Then he soon determined to try to kill him, and watched for an opportunity.

One day, when Saul was more gloomy than usual, David tried to amuse him by playing on his harp. When Saul thought that David was occupied with his music, and did not see him, he threw a javelin at him, which was a sharp instrument a little like a spear. But David was cautious and moved away, and the javelin went into the wall.

Saul perceived that God took care of David. He began to dislike David so much that he could not bear to see him; so he sent him away to the army of the Israelites, near the country of Philistia. This army was stationed there to watch the

Philistines, that they might not come suddenly into the land of Israel, and rob and kill the people, as they were accustomed to do when they could find an opportunity.

Saul made David a captain in this army, and he behaved himself prudently. He was very modest and careful to do right, and the people liked him. When a person is much beloved, as David was, he is said to be popular. It sometimes makes people proud and vain to be popular, but it did not make David so.

Saul wished much that David would do something wrong that he might have an excuse for injuring him. But David was so humble and prudent that Saul could not find any fault with him. He hated David the more when he found the people loved him, and when the Philistines were fighting with his army, he sent a person to tell David, that if he would be very brave, he

might marry the eldest daughter of Saul, whose name was Merab.

Saul hoped that David, being a brave man, would go into the midst of the Philistines, and that he would probably be killed by them. David fought bravely, and God preserved his life : but Saul deceived him, and Merab was married to another person.

Then Saul told David that he might marry his youngest daughter Michal, if he would first kill a hundred of the Philistines. David said that he was a poor man, and ought not to think of being the king's son-in-law. But he went with his men to fight the Philistines, and they killed two hundred of them. Saul was then obliged to perform his promise. David returned to Gibeah, and was married to the king's daughter.

Saul now grew more and more wicked every day. He had probably, by this time,

heard that Samuel had anointed David to be king. Saul knew that Samuel would not have anointed him unless God had commanded him to do so. It was therefore plain that God had determined to make David king over Israel. Saul attempted to prevent this by killing David. It was dreadful to wish to oppose so good a God.

Saul knew that he could not succeed in doing it, and if he had not been foolish he would not have made the attempt. But he had indulged evil passions so long, that he could not think and reason as well as he could formerly. This is the way with people who are envious and malicious. They indulge evil thoughts and desires, till they cannot judge what is right and what is wrong, and what it is wise or unwise to do.

David had become a member of the king's family and was very popular with

the people. Jonathan was his intimate friend. This made it more likely that he would at some future time be king; and Saul told Jonathan and all his servants that they must kill David.

Jonathan was much grieved at hearing this command from his father. He told David of the orders his father had given, and advised him to conceal himself among the bushes, or in a cave in a field where Saul was accustomed to walk. David accordingly hid himself, and the next morning Jonathan walked into the field with his father. While he was walking he talked with his father about David, and begged he would not hurt him. He said that David did not deserve to be killed, for he had been faithful to Saul, and had done him many services: he had conquered Goliath, and saved the people of Israel;—an act which Saul once admired and rejoiced at.

Saul was convinced that he had done wrong to persecute David, and promised Jonathan, with an oath, that he should not be slain. When the king was gone, Jonathan called David out of his hiding place, and told him what his father had promised. The two friends then returned to the palace, and the king received them kindly.

CHAPTER V.

David flees to Samuel.

BUT David was not permitted to live quietly much longer.

Soon after this there was another war with the Philistines. David went out with the army, and fought bravely against them, and they were afraid of him, and fled into their own country. When Saul saw David's

success, he began to be jealous of him again, and when David was playing on his harp, attempted to slay him with his javelin. But David escaped and went to his own house.

And Saul sent men to watch around David's house, and to kill him when he came out in the morning. But Michal knew that there were spies near the house, and she told her husband and assisted him to escape.

I suppose the messengers were watching by the outer door or gate. But Michal let down David by a cord, from a window on the other side of the house. "And Michal took an image, and laid it in the bed, and put a pillow of goats' hair for his bolster, and covered it with a cloth. And when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, he is sick. And Saul sent the messengers again to see David, saying,

bring him up to me in the bed, that I may slay him. And when the messengers were come in, there was an image in the bed, with a pillow of goats' hair for his bolster." Michal made her excuse, that David had threatened her life if she did not help him to get off, but this was false and very wrong. A lie is always wicked. God will take care of those who do their duty, and David himself once said of the Lord "though he slay me yet will I trust him."

It was night, and the inhabitants of Gibeah had retired to rest, when David walked swiftly through the streets, and took the road that led westward from the city. Think what must have been his feelings, when he looked back and remembered that he was driven away from his wife, and his dear friend Jonathan, and all whom he loved. He was alone, and

knew not whither to go. He feared he could not escape the cruelty of Saul who was king over all Israel, and could send his orders into every part of the land. At last he determined to go to Samuel, who might be able to protect him from Saul. He hoped the king would respect the aged prophet who had been accustomed to speak to him, and to deliver to him the commands of God.

He went towards Ramah, where Samuel lived. It was in the tribe of Benjamin, north-west from Gibeah.

If you wish to know what David's thoughts were that night, when he was travelling over the solitary road from Gibeah to Ramah, you will find them in the fifty-ninth Psalm; for that was composed at this time. When he was leaving the city he began his prayer to God:—

“Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God: defend me from them that rise up against me. Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men. For lo, they lie in wait for my soul: the mighty are gathered against me: not for my transgression, nor for my sin, O LORD. They run and prepare themselves without my fault: awake to help me, and behold.”

Then he perhaps, heard the barking of wild dogs who were coming about the city.

In Palestine there are many wild dogs, that are fierce and dangerous, like wolves. They live among the mountains and in the wilderness, but in the night they sometimes come howling into the cities in search of food. They often attack animals, and sometimes men.

When David heard them barking, he thought they were cruel, like Saul; and

he says, "They return at evening : they make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city." Then he remembered that God was just, and would protect him, and punish his enemies—"But thou, O Lord, shalt laugh at them ; thou shalt have all the heathen in derision. Because of his strength will I wait upon thee : for God is my defence."—After he had thought about God a little while, he began to be comforted, and as the morning dawned, and he saw the green hills about Ramah, and knew that he was safe, for the present, from his pursuers, he broke out into a song of praise to God—"But I will sing of thy power ; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning : for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble. Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing : for God is my defence, and the God of my mercy."

When David met Samuel, he told him how he had been treated by Saul. Samuel took David home with him, to Naioth. This was a part of Ramah, where there was a school of the prophets, which Samuel taught.

The prophets were good men, who spent their time in praying to God, and praising him, and teaching the people. God often spoke to them, and gave them messages to kings and other persons, in the land of Israel. By these messages, God directed the persons to whom they were sent, what they must do; and sometimes he told them of things that were going to happen.

Samuel was the greatest prophet then living. He was an old man, and had been a prophet ever since he was a little child. There were many young prophets in Israel; and Samuel began to have schools, where they could come together, and study, and

prepare themselves to teach the people. These schools were continued many years after Samuel's death. David remained with Samuel at Naioth, till Saul heard he was there, and sent messengers to take him. When they arrived, they saw the young prophets standing together, and Samuel standing at their head. They were prophesying. This sometimes means repeating what God has said; but here, it probably means, singing or speaking the praises of God.

As soon as the messengers saw the company of the prophets, the Spirit of God came upon them, and they began to prophesy. They could not take David and bind him, as Saul had ordered. When this was told Saul, more messengers were then sent by him, to take David; but God restrained them also, and they joined in prophesying

Then Saul set out to go himself to Ramah; but while he was on the way, God put such thoughts into his mind, that he began to prophesy. When he came to Naioth, he continued singing the praises of God before Samuel. He could not hurt David, though he had come on purpose to kill him. This act of Saul was so very singular, and it was so strange that he should be among the chosen sons of God, that it became a proverb among the Israelites—"Is Saul also among the prophets."

CHAPTER VI.

The Friendship of David and Jonathan.

WHILE Saul was prophesying before Samuel, David left Naioth, and went hastily towards Gibeah, to see Jonathan. As

soon as he had found him, he said to him, "What wicked thing have I done? How have I injured the king, your father, that he should seek to kill me?" And Jonathan said, "I do not think my father intends to kill you at this time, for he has not informed me of it, and he always tells me of what he means to do."

But David replied, "Your father certainly knows that I enjoy your favour and affection, and says to himself, Let not Jonathan know my design, lest he be grieved; but in truth, there is but a step between me and death." Then Jonathan was sad when he heard of his father's wickedness, and told David that he would help him in any way that he could.

David then reminded Jonathan that the next day was the new moon, or first day of the month. The first day of every month was kept by the Israelites, as a day for re-

ligious worship. It was not quite like the Sabbath, but a little like it. On the morning of that day, the levites blew the silver trumpets, and the people thanked God that he had permitted them to live through another month. The king used to offer sacrifice at the new moon, and after the sacrifice, he made a feast for his family and some of his chief officers, who were expected to be present.

David was one of the king's family, because he was his son-in-law, and he knew that Saul would expect him to be at the feast the next day. He was afraid that Saul would kill him, and determined not to go. He thought that Saul would inquire why he did not come to the feast, and he wished Jonathan to say, that he had given him leave to go and see his friends at Bethlehem. If Saul spoke pleasantly, and said, It is very

well; it would show that he began to feel kindly towards David, and had determined not to hurt him. But if he was angry, it would show that he was disappointed, in not having an opportunity to kill him.

David was much distressed. He was afraid of the king. He knew that if Jonathan should be unfaithful, and tell Saul where he was, he had not long to live. He begged Jonathan to kill him himself, if he thought he had done any thing wrong, rather than betray him to his father. And Jonathan promised David that he would try to discover whether the king meant to injure him; and if he did, he would inform David, and assist him to escape.

Jonathan was afraid that they should be seen by some of the people of Gibeah, whom Saul had commanded to kill David; so he asked David to walk with him into a field. They walked out, where they

could talk together without being heard, or seen.

These two friends had often before walked together, in the pleasant fields near Gibeah, when they were tired of the noise and confusion of the city. They could sit under a spreading fig-tree, or a hedge of myrtles and roses, and admire the green meadows, where the cattle and sheep were feeding, and the groves where the birds were singing, and where the trees were covered with blossoms. They could see, at a little distance, high mountains, with rocks upon their tops; and vines, loaded with grapes, upon their sides.

They used to talk of God, who made this pleasant world, and who gives so many good things to his creatures. Then they would speak of another beautiful land, where they hoped to go when they should die; where the flowers would never wither,

and the fruits would never decay. In that country, there would be no sun and moon, for God would be there, and the light that is around Him would be much brighter than that of the sun. There would be no wicked people there, to trouble them. They would not shed any more tears, nor be sorry any more; because they would be perfectly happy in loving and obeying God.

Jonathan and David remembered these pleasant conversations, as they went into the field. They looked sad, for they feared they should not be permitted to walk and talk together any more.

When they came to a quiet spot, Jonathan told his mind very plainly to David; he promised to protect and befriend him; and, on the other hand, called upon David to promise protection to himself and his family, clearly expecting

David to become king, at a future day. They then entered into a solemn covenant; that is, they agreed that they would always be kind to each other. Jonathan promised, that if he found his father was angry with David, he would tell him; so that David might hide himself from Saul. And David promised, that when he became king, he would be kind to Jonathan and to his children. Then they asked God to hear their promises to each other, and to punish them if they did not keep them. When two persons make an agreement together, and ask God to help them to perform that agreement, it is called a covenant. It must not be done about common things, but only about things that are very important.

Jonathan now told David, that after three days, he must come and hide himself by a rock in the field. And he promised that he would come with his bow and ar-

rows, and stand by that rock, and shoot three arrows, and send a boy to pick them up. If David should hear Jonathan call to the boy thus, "the arrows are on this side of you," he might know that the king would treat him kindly, and that he might return to Gibeah; but if Jonathan should say, "the arrows are beyond you," then David should understand that he was in danger, and must escape from Saul as soon as possible. Jonathan proposed this plan, because he thought there might be people near, which would prevent his speaking to David. The two friends now separated.

The next day was the new moon. Saul had several animals killed. Part of them he offered in sacrifice, and the remainder he ordered his servants to cook for the feast. When he sat down to dinner, Abner, the cousin of Saul, and commander-in-chief of his armies, was present, and so

was Jonathan the prince, and probably many others ; but David was absent. Saul did not inquire about him, because he thought that he might not be prepared to come that day to the feast. But the next day he made another feast; and when he saw that David was absent, he asked why he did not come to the table. And Jonathan said, " David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem, that he might be present at a sacrifice, that his friends were going to offer, at the festival of the new moon." Saul now broke out into a violent passion against Jonathan, for giving David permission to go, and for being his friend. He was afraid David would escape from him, and he talked quite angrily and improperly to his son. His eyes looked fiery, and he spoke very loud.

He told Jonathan that he would never be king, while David lived. This, Jonathan

knew very well. He knew that he must be deprived of the kingdom, on account of his father's sins. Jonathan was sorry that he might not be king over Israel. He had expected to be so, ever since he was a little child. The Israelites loved him, and he loved them, and knew how to rule them well. But he saw that God had chosen David, and he was willing to submit.

When Saul commanded him to bring David, that he might be slain, Jonathan said, "Why must he be killed? What has he done to deserve death?" Then Saul was so angry, that he threw a javelin at Jonathan. But he was in such a passion that he did not aim it right, and the prince was not hurt.

Look at Saul, and see how dreadful it is to be passionate. How fierce and cruel he is; more like a furious wild beast, than a man and a king. He must appear very

hateful to the great men and courtiers, who sit at his table. They all dislike him greatly, but they dare not show it, for fear that he will punish them. If you are passionate, none of your companions will love you; and, what is worse, God will not love you. He only loves such people as are meek, and gentle, and forgiving.

Jonathan was ashamed of his father, and much displeased at his conduct. He could eat no more, but rose from the table and went away. When he was by himself, I think he must have prayed to God, that his father might repent of his great sin, and that David's life might be saved.

After a restless night, he rose early in the morning, and taking his bow, he bound around his shoulders the quiver that contained his arrows. He called a little lad who was accustomed to wait upon him, and walked towards the field where Da-

vid was. The bright sun was just rising above the hills, and the dews were sparkling on the grass. The air was pure and fragrant, because it blew over hedges and groves that were loaded with blossoms. Light wreaths of mist were rolling up the sides of the mountains, and when the sun shone upon them, they looked like silver clouds, resting upon the green olive trees. The waters of the stream were smooth and still, and the water fowls were sailing around among the tufts of lilies, that lay upon its surface. The deer would look for a moment upon Jonathan and his little attendant, and then start away, and spring back again into the wood. The boy trudged along, as happy as the birds, and as the bees that he heard humming in the flowers: but the prince was not happy. He did not notice the pleasant sights and sounds, because there were painful

thoughts in his mind. He wore a long robe, of a rich colour, with broad fringes upon it. It was fastened around his waist with a girdle. He had sandals on his feet. These were pieces of leather, fitted to the bottom of the feet, and laced around the feet and ankles with strings. On his head he wore a sort of turban or mitre, made of cloth. His eye brows were drawn over his eyes, and he was looking on the ground. He thought of his father's guilt; of the danger of his friend, and his own gloomy prospects.

When he came to the rock where David was hidden, he shot some arrows into the field, and sent the boy to bring them back. While the boy was running to pick them up, Jonathan shot another arrow, and called out to the boy that the arrow was beyond him. David, who lay hid in an opening of the rock, heard and understood

it all; but the boy supposed that the prince was amusing himself with his bow and arrows. When the boy came with the arrows, Jonathan gave him his quiver and bow, and sent him back into the city. David waited till the boy had gone, and then arose out of his hiding place, and fell on his face to the ground three times, in token of respect. This was the way the people in that country showed their respect for superiors. They then kissed one another, and wept with one another until David exceeded. They feared that they should never meet again in this world, and it was a very solemn parting. When they had expressed to each other their grief and affection, Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace; and remember the promises we have made to each other. May the Lord bless us and our children, and be our God for ever." Jonathan then walked slowly

back to Gibeah; and David, after casting one mournful look upon the towers of the city, hastened away.

CHAPTER VII.

David goes to Nob.

DAVID is walking very fast towards the west. He is going to Nob, a city beyond Ramah. Presently we shall meet him there; but now, we will leave him for a little while, and return to Jonathan. He has gone back to Gibeah, expecting to receive very harsh treatment from his father, for assisting David. Jonathan was the person who would be most injured, if David should live to be king over Israel. Yet he was the only person with whom David would trust himself, when the king had given orders that he should be killed. Jo-

nathan protected David, and concealed him from his father. This shows that David had judged wisely, in choosing him for his friend.

It is a very difficult thing to choose a friend, especially for young persons, who are easily deceived. Your companion may be sensible, and witty, and agreeable, and very kind to you, when you are rich and happy; but he is not a good friend, unless he will assist you when you are in distress, and give up his own wishes for your sake, as Jonathan did for the sake of David. Now, it takes a great while, and requires a great deal of judgment, to find out whether a person will do this. I would not then advise children to attempt to choose friends for themselves. They should never be intimate with any one, without asking the advice of their parents. But you will not always have your parents to think for you.

In a few years, you must judge and act for yourselves. Then, I hope, you will choose your friends wisely, as David did.

Let us try to think of some of those things that are necessary in a friend. It seems very necessary that a friend should be generous, and not selfish. A selfish person does not care for others, if he can have what he wants himself. And when there is but one good thing, and many others want it as much as he does, he does not think of that; he tries to get it for himself, and is not sorry for those who do not get it. He will not give it up, even to his best friend. If you are trying with him for a prize at school, and he should obtain it, he will be pleased, and laugh at you because you have not got it. And, if you should obtain it, he will be displeased, and look at you with jealous eyes. You do not want such a friend as this. Jonathan was not

such a friend. To be a king of Israel was a great thing; much greater than you will ever think of obtaining. Jonathan had been always told that he would be king, and he had studied and prepared himself for it. The people loved him so much, that they treated him with nearly as much respect, as if he were already king. Yet he was so generous, that he was willing to give it all up to David, when he knew that God had chosen him; and he was not jealous of David. He did not think, every time he saw him, "I do not like you, because you are going to get away my kingdom." He loved him, and helped him as much as he could.

Another thing that is necessary to make a good friend, is sincerity. Some people will be very kind and polite when you are present, but when you are absent they will speak against you, and try to injure you.

They will flatter you, and make fair promises, when you do not need their assistance; but will desert you, if you are in trouble. They are deceitful. You may as well play with a serpent, or try to walk on the sea when it is smooth, and the sun shines upon it and it looks firm, as to trust a deceitful person. I had rather have no companion, than to walk about and talk with any one who is not sincere.

Jonathan was sincere. He spoke well of David, and tried to do him good, when David was absent, and would not know it. He spoke the truth, when he told David that he would conceal him from the king till he could get away beyond his reach. He kept his promises, and thus David's life was saved.

There are several more things that are necessary in a friend; but I will mention only one. It is piety. This is more im-

portant than any thing else, because all other good feelings spring from it. You cannot be sure that a person will be always disinterested and sincere, unless you know that he loves God, and prays to him, and is trying to do right. Besides, if you love your friend, you will soon learn to think, and feel, and act as he does. You will copy his example; and if he is not pious, he will not set you a good example. I hope when you are old enough to choose friends, you will find such as are good. But you must deserve good friends, or you cannot expect to have them. Those persons who are pious, and disinterested, and sincere, will not love you, and consent to be your companions, unless you are like themselves.

While David was on the way to Nob, some young men joined themselves to him, being determined to accompany him where-

ever he went. Perhaps they had been his servants, when he lived in Gibeah.

The tabernacle of God was at Nob. It had been removed there from Shiloh, after the ark was carried away by the Philistines, many years before. The priests of God lived in the city, and also the Gibeonites, who were slaves, and did the work of the tabernacle. Many sacrifices were offered up, and many ceremonies were observed, so there was a great deal of work to be done. David wished to go there before he left the country, that he might pray to God at his tabernacle, and receive a blessing from the high priest.

David came in sight of the city of Nob, tired and hungry, and not able to walk as fast as he did, when he began his journey. He sometimes looks back, to see if any one is pursuing him; and sometimes repeats to himself some of his beautiful psalms.

We may imagine the anxious David entering the streets of the city, and now approaching a very large yard, which is sur-

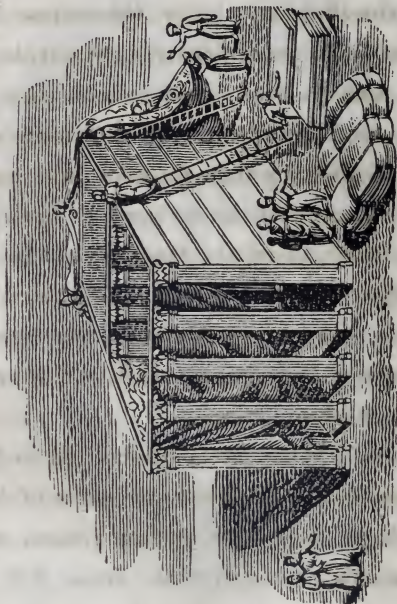


rounded by pillars of brass. This is the court of the tabernacle. Curtains of linen,

of the finest net-work are drawn from pillar to pillar, so as to conceal the whole yard from the people without. The entrance to the court is on the east side. The curtains that hang before the entrance, are of fine linen, embroidered with purple, and blue, and scarlet. They are drawn up by cords, and David and his companions enter with confidence that they are now among the friends, and the servants of God. On such an occasion, the thought would come into his heart, "Oh how I love thy tabernacles. How peaceful and holy are the pursuits of these men, and how unlike the conduct of my enemies."

In the centre of the court, and in front of the entrance, stood the altar of burnt offerings. It was a square frame, made of boards, covered with brass, five feet and a half high, and nine feet in breadth; the inside was filled up quite to

the top, with earth. Here a fire was kept constantly burning, to consume the sacrifices, and here the priests offered the morning and evening sacrifice.



Beyond this, in the western part of the court, stood the tabernacle. It was a long,

narrow building. The entrance to the building, as represented in the view of the tabernacle, is at the eastern end, which faces the entrance to the court and the altar of burnt-offerings. The tabernacle was built of boards of the acacia wood, covered inside and out with shining gold; the entrance was left open, except that there was a row of golden pillars across it, and splendid curtains of fine white linen, beautifully embroidered in rich colours, were thrown over the whole building, so as to give it the appearance of a tent or tabernacle, such as are erected for eastern kings, when they rest upon their journeys. These beautiful curtains would be spoiled, if they were exposed to the sun and rain; so they were covered with several other curtains of a coarser kind.

Between the door of the tabernacle and the altar of burnt-offerings, stood the

brass laver. This was filled with water every morning, and was very useful; for none of the priests might enter the tabernacle, or go up to the altar, without washing their hands and feet. It was very large; the upper part shaped like a tea cup, and the lower part like a wine-glass. In the lower part there were spouts, through which the water could be drawn into basins, when wanted.

Such was probably the tabernacle, when David reached Nob. Looking around the court, he sees many people very busy in every part of it; the Gibeonites carrying wood, to keep alive the flame upon the altar, and in one corner, by the court, a priest standing, where some lambs are kept. He is choosing two lambs for the evening sacrifice; the other priests are about to offer a sacrifice on the altar. But who is that man in long robes, and with a grave

countenance, who is standing near the door of the tabernacle? That is Ahimelech, the high priest. He is looking with surprise at David, as he approaches him, his face red with heat and fatigue, and his clothes soiled with the dust. He had never before seen him appear so much disturbed. Whenever he had been at the tabernacle before, he had always been attended by some of the king's officers and great men, and followed by many servants.

Ahimelech did not know that the king was angry with David, and asked why he had not his usual attendants. Then David was tempted to do wrong. He was hungry, and could not travel further, unless he was supplied with food. He feared Ahimelech would not relieve him, if he knew that the king was his enemy. Instead of trusting in God and speaking the truth, he contrived a lie to deceive the

high priest. He told Ahimelech that the king had sent him somewhere on business, which must be kept secret; and that he had sent his servants to different places, to wait for him.

He asked Ahimelech to give him the bread that was under his hand; but the high priest said that it was not common bread, but some of the shew-bread, which he had removed from the table in the tabernacle.

In the outer room of the tabernacle stood a table, on which twelve loaves of unleavened bread were constantly kept. It was called shew-bread, because it was placed or showed before God, in his house. Every Sabbath these loaves were exchanged for new ones. Those that were taken away, were eaten by the priests in the court of the tabernacle. Ahimelech hesitated about giving David this bread,

because none but the priests might eat it. But he thought, that as David was in great need, and the king's business was important, he would venture to give it to him.

David then asked the high priest if he could give him a sword or spear, as he had come away in such haste that he had brought no weapons. Ahimelech told him they had no weapons in that place; but there was the sword of Goliath, which had been laid up in the tabernacle, as a memorial of David's victory over the giant. David was much pleased at the answer, and said, "there is none like that, give it to me."

David wished, before he went away from the tabernacle, to ask counsel of God; and he requested the high priest to go into the tabernacle, and inquire of God what he should do. The high priest could not do this, without wearing the Urim and

Thummim. It is hard to say what the Urim and Thummim was ; but it was something that was put into a splendid breast-plate, covered with jewels, which the high priest sometimes wore. Ahimelech put on this breast plate, and when the curtain before the entrance was drawn up, he entered the outer room of the tabernacle.

Every thing looked bright and sparkling, for the sides of the room, and all the furniture, were covered with gold. On the left hand of the high priest stood a golden candlestick, with many branches, ornamented with flowers carved in gold. Lamps, which were kept constantly burning, were placed in all these branches. On the right hand was the table, on which two piles of shew-bread were placed. An altar, covered with gold, on which incense was burnt morning and evening, stood directly before Ahimelech, and back of that an embroi-

dered curtain was drawn across the tabernacle. It separated the outer apartment, or holy place, where the high priest stood, from the inner apartment, which was called the Holy of Holies, because the glory of God shone there, and God was present in a peculiar manner. The high priest stood before the curtain, and solemnly asked God to direct David; and God answered him from the Holy of Holies.

David would gladly have remained to join in the sacrifices and worship of the Sabbath, but he was afraid that messengers from king Saul might overtake him. So he took leave of the high priest, and departed.

While he had been talking with Ahimelech, one of the servants of Saul stood near, and listened to all that was said. His name was Doeg, and he was an Edomite; that is, one of the descendants of Esau.

CHAPTER VIII.

David tries to escape from Saul.

WHEN David and his friends had reached a solitary place, they sat down under a tree, and refreshed themselves with the bread that Ahimelech had given them, and some water from the clear spring. Then they felt stronger, and went forward to Gath, one of the cities of Philistia. They went immediately to the palace of Achish, the king of Gath. David entered the court of the palace, and was conducted to the king. He asked Achish to protect him; and Achish gave him leave to remain in his palace.

Achish was a sensible king. David had been useful to Saul, and Achish knew that he might become useful to him. He saw that David had great talents, and

treated him with much attention. When the great men of Gath saw it, they were jealous and displeased. They were afraid that David would draw away from themselves, the favour of the king; and they pretended to think that David had come as a spy into the city.

They asked the king if this was not the same David, who had already been chosen to be king of Israel; and who had been praised, in the songs of the maidens, for killing Goliath, one of the lords of Gath.

David, seeing their jealous looks, and that they were trying to make the king suspicious of him, was much alarmed.

If David had remained a shepherd boy, and had never done any thing remarkable, he might have been safe at home. And if he had gone into Philistia, he might have been safe there. But when songs were composed and sung in his praise, and

he was talked about and celebrated all over the country, he began to be distressed and in danger. Saul envied and drove him away, and then the great men of Gath envied and tried to injure him.

David found it very inconvenient to be so much celebrated; and many others have found it so. Those persons who are not praised and considered great, are often the happiest. Yet many people are always trying to be great. Perhaps God suffered these troubles to come upon David, that he might not be proud, as he would have been, if he had been suddenly raised from a poor man to be a king.

David was much distressed, and knew not what to do, when he saw that the Philistine lords were plotting against him. He composed the fifty-sixth Psalm* at this

* Be merciful unto me, O God : for man would swallow me up ; he fighting daily oppresseth me.

time. In this Psalm, he expressed great confidence that God would take care of him; but he soon lost this confidence, and

Mine enemies would daily swallow me up: for they be many that fight against me, O thou Most High.

What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.

In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.

Every day they wrest my words: all their thoughts are against me for evil.

They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps, when they wait for my soul.

Shall they escape by iniquity? in thine anger cast down the people, O God.

Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?

When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God is for me.

In God will I praise his word: in the Lord will I praise his word.

In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.

Thy vows are upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee.

For thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?

became so much afraid of Achish and his courtiers, that he acted very unbecomingly. That they might not envy him any longer, but might rather pity his misfortunes, he pretended to be crazy. He neglected his dress, and scrabbled on the doors of the king's palace; and went about like a person who knows not what he is doing. The people began to despise him; and Achish told his servants to send him away, for he did not want a crazy man about his palace.

After David had escaped from Gath, his courage began to revive. He walked, with his few companions, eastward into his own country, thinking as he went, of the goodness of God in delivering him from so many dangers. They soon turned aside from the high road that led through fields of grain and plantations of fig and olive trees, into more wild and unfrequented paths. They

were in the land of Judah, not many miles from Bethlehem, but a long range of mountains lay between them and that city.

They were seeking, on the western side of those mountains, for some place of concealment. The tall trees and shrubs protected them from the heat of the sun. When they were hungry and thirsty, they could pick the berries and wild fruits that grew among the bushes, and drink from the stream that trickled down the rocks. After climbing steep hills, and walking carefully along the edges of the precipices, they came to a high rock, in which was a large opening. We may suppose that this opening was almost hidden by vines, hanging from the top of the rock, and trees and shrubs growing by its sides.

They pushed aside the vines, and entered a cave or hollow place in the rock. It was a large room. The floor, and sides,

and roof, were of rock. This was the cave of Adullam. Here David wrote the thirty-fourth* Psalm, in praise of God for delivering him from his enemies, at Gath.

* I will bless the Lord at all times : his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

My soul shall make her boast in the Lord : the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.

O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.

I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.

They looked unto him, and were lightened ; and their faces were not ashamed.

This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.

The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and he delivereth them.

O taste and see that the Lord is good ; blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

O fear the Lord, ye his saints ; for there is no want to them that fear him.

The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger ; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.

Come, ye children, hearken unto me : I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good ?

He had not been long in this place, before his friends at Bethlehem learned where he had concealed himself. They were already exposed to danger on his account, from the hatred of Saul. They believed that David would one day be king, and they determined to unite themselves to

Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.

Depart from evil, and do good ; seek peace, and pursue it.

The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.

The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.

The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart ; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

Many are the afflictions of the righteous : but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.

He keepeth all his bones : not one of them is broken.

Evil shall slay the wicked : and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.

The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants : and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.

him. His parents, and brothers, and nephews, came to the cave where he was, and remained with him. Three of his sister's sons, Joab, and Abishai, and Asahel, were afterwards officers in his army.

It soon became known in the neighbourhood, that David lived at Adullam, and the number which came to him amounted to about four hundred men. They made him their captain. Some of these men were very poor; others were in debt, and afraid of their creditors; and others were discontented with the government of Saul, and wanted a new king. They knew that David expected to become king, and they thought he would make them great men, when he came into power, if they joined themselves early to him.

Perhaps these men had cause to complain of Saul. They had probably brought

trouble upon themselves by their own imprudence; but they hoped to gain something, if they could obtain a new king. They were brave men, and much attached to David. Probably they wished to have David collect an army immediately, and fight against Saul. But David would not do this. He chose to wait till God gave him the kingdom.

David knew that he could not long be hidden from Saul, and he wished to find a safe and comfortable place for his father and mother, who were too old to bear hardships and frequent removals. He remembered that they had relations in Moab, as his father's grandmother, Ruth, had come from that country.

Protected by his company of soldiers, he went with his parents to a town called Mizpeh, of Moab, and requested the king of Moab to take care of them

The king consented that they should live in one of his houses.

David and his men staid in a city of Moab, which had strong walls and towers, till God sent a prophet to tell him to go back into the land of Judah. David instantly obeyed the command, and went to the forest of Hareth.

CHAPTER IX.

The Murder of the Priests by Saul.

I WILL now tell you more about Saul. After David had gone away from Gibeah, Saul tried for some time to find him, but he could not. At last, one day, when all his officers and many soldiers were standing around, he began to reproach them for not telling him where David was. Because they did not tell him, Saul accused them of

having agreed with David, to kill him. He asked them very scornfully, if David had promised to pay them for doing this, by giving them fields and vineyards, and making them great officers. He also accused his son Jonathan of being a traitor, or of wishing to injure the king.

All the good men who were near Saul, were ashamed to hear him talk so foolishly and wickedly; but there was one person standing by, whom you will recollect, when I tell you his name. It was Doeg the Edomite, who was in the court of the tabernacle, when David came there in distress, to ask the help of Ahimelech.

Doeg was very glad to tell Saul what he knew; for he was a wicked man, and loved to do mischief. He informed the king, that Ahimelech, the high priest, had assisted David when he fled from Saul, by giving him food and a sword; but he did

not tell him that Ahimelech was deceived, and supposed that David had come there on an errand from the king.

Then the king was very angry with Ahimelech, and sent to Nob, and commanded him to come immediately to the palace at Gibeah. He sent also for all the other priests who were at Nob. There were eighty-five of them. They all came and appeared before the king, dressed in the long robes which they usually wore when offering sacrifices at the tabernacle.

Saul asked Ahimelech why he had given David bread, and a sword, and inquired of God for him. Ahimelech answered, that he supposed he was doing right in helping David, because he was the king's son-in-law, and had always been an obedient subject to Saul. This was not the first time he had inquired of God for David; he had often done it before. He said that he did

not know that Saul was displeased with David. He begged that he might not be blamed for what he had done, because he had no intention of doing wrong.

Ahimelech was so generous, that he did not inform Saul of the lie that David had told him. I hope you will remember this, when you are tempted to defend yourselves by telling of the faults of others.

It was very plain that Ahimelech was innocent; but Saul would not believe it. He told Ahimelech, that he and all the other priests must die; though the other priests had not given any aid to David. He commanded his guards to kill them; but they would not, because they knew that the priests did not deserve to die. The king then ordered Doeg to do it. So Doeg murdered all the priests except one, and afterwards went with some soldiers to the city of Nob, and slew all the people in the

city ; even the women and children. Saul was very cruel, to allow so many innocent persons to be killed. Such cruel kings are called tyrants.

While Doeg was killing the priests, Abiathar, one of the sons of Ahimelech, escaped from the palace, and fled into the land of Judah, to David. He told David what Saul had done ; and David was much grieved. He remembered how he had deceived Ahimelech, and was very sorry. He told Abiathar to remain with him, and promised to take care of him. Abiathar was now high priest, because his father and brothers were dead.

CHAPTER X.

David saves the city of Keilah.

DAVID was now hidden in the forest of Hareth. There were six hundred men with him ; but they kept as much concealed as they could, among the rocks and trees. It was the time of harvest ; and when David or any of his men were obliged to leave the wood, they saw the reapers cutting down the grain with their sickles. Harvest time, in Palestine, lasted seven weeks, from about the first of April, to near the middle of May.

There was a city in the neighbourhood, that had walls and gates like the other cities in that country. All around the city were large fields of grain, for the inhabitants were husbandmen. It was a very happy time. Early in the morning the gates were opened, and the people were

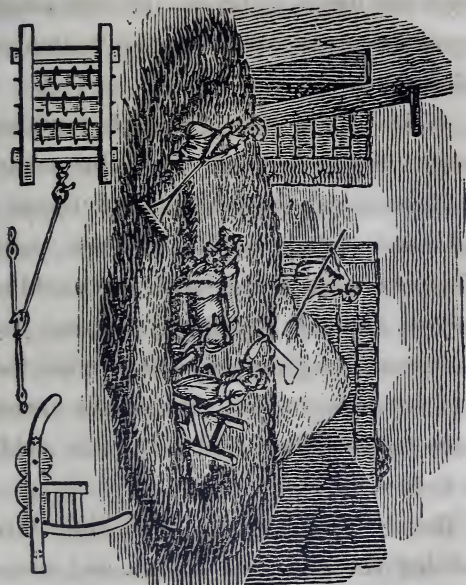
seen leaving the city, and hastening towards their fields of corn.

The owner of the field walked about to see that his servants and children did their work properly, and sometimes he would work himself. The reapers were very joyful, and songs of praise to God might be heard in all the fields. If any traveller passed near, he would stop and salute the reapers, by saying, "the blessing of Jehovah be upon you;" and they would answer, "be thou blessed of the Lord."

After the grain was cut down, the men and women bound it into bundles, and then poor people who had no land of their own, were scattered all over the fields, picking up the stalks that had been left. This is called gleaning.

When the grain was all bound up, the reapers were very active in carrying it to their threshing floors. The threshing

floors were large round places in the field, where the grass and herbs had been ploughed up, and the ground beaten hard,



like a floor. The reapers scattered the grain in a circle on the floor, and then harnessed a pair of oxen to the threshing ma-

chine. This was a heavy wooden frame, with iron wheels upon the bottom, having sharp teeth, like a saw. The driver sat upon this frame and drove the oxen around upon the grain, till it was all beaten out of the ears.

While the people of Keilah were employed in threshing, the Philistine soldiers came suddenly upon them, and began to take away their grain and their cattle. They were much distressed, but could not drive away the Philistines, because they were not strong enough, and because they had not brought their spears and armour from home. They had only their sickles to fight with.

David heard that the Philistines were robbing the people of Keilah, and wished to help them. He called Abiathar, the high priest, and told him to put on the ephod. This was an outer garment, in

which the breast-plate, with the Urim and Thummin was fastened. Abiathar then inquired of God if David should go and fight with the Philistines; and the Lord told him to go.

But when David called his men, he found that they were afraid to go, because they would be in danger from Saul, as well as from the Philistines. David inquired of the Lord again, and the Lord told him to go, and promised to help him to conquer the Philistines.

Then David and his men went to Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and took from them the grain and the cattle which they were carrying away from Keilah. Many of the Philistines were killed, and the rest fled. David then went into the city; and I suppose the inhabitants were very grateful to him for helping them.

Saul soon heard that David was at Keilah, and he was very glad. He determined to surround the city with his soldiers, and he thought it would be impossible for David to escape. But David heard of his intention, and he told Abiathar to inquire of God, if Saul would certainly come with his soldiers to take David. God said he would come. And David inquired if the men of Keilah would give him up to Saul. God answered that they would. God knew that the people of Keilah would be so much afraid of Saul, that they would not dare to protect David, though he had saved them from the Philistines.

Then David escaped from Keilah, and went into the wilderness of Ziph. It was a mountainous place, near the Dead sea; and David and his men hid themselves in a wood. There are many large caves among the mountains of Palestine, and I

suppose David lived in one of them, when he was in the wood of Ziph.

He was very sorrowful, and if he had not thought of God, and trusted in him, he would have had no comfort. He was tired of being driven about from place to place, without any home, or comfortable food. He was afraid that Saul and his soldiers, would discover which way he had fled from Keilah, and come and kill him. He wrote a beautiful little poem at this time, which will tell you his feelings. It is the thirty-first Psalm. He first prays that God would save him from his enemies. Then he becomes more submissive, and gives himself up to God, to do what he pleased with him. This feeling made him happy, and he began to thank God for bringing him safely out of Keilah. But soon he began to think again of his troubles. He was weary and sad, and all the

time afraid of the king. His days were spent in continual sorrow, and many of his nights in weeping. His enemies were trying to kill him, and he was deserted by many who had been once his friends. If they saw him passing along the road, they would instantly run away, that they might not be seen in his company, because he was in disgrace with the king. Many of his acquaintance had given him up, as much as if he was dead, and laid in the grave; but in spite of all this, he trusted in God, and soon began to praise him.

CHAPTER XI.

Jonathan's visit to David

SAUL was now seeking every where for David, and David knew it. He remained in a cave, in the midst of a thick wood.

Let us think of David in the wood of Ziph.

It was probably near sunset, and the heat of the day was over. David had come out of the cave. He looked thoughtful and sad. Some of his chief officers were near, and talking together. Perhaps they were planning how they should escape from Saul.

As you looked through the trees, you might see, in every part of the wood, little circles of the men, who were making preparations for their evening meal. Some were searching among the openings of the rocks, and in the hollows of the trees, for honeycomb. There are so many bees in Palestine, that they make their honey in such places; so that the whole country was called, "a land flowing with milk and honey," and honey was often found dropping out of the rocks. Perhaps some of

the men were kindling fires, and others gathering nuts and berries, or picking the fruit of the prickly pear, which grows much larger there than in this country.

Presently David saw a person richly dressed, walking among the trees, and coming near to the place where he stood. It was his friend Jonathan. David was delighted to see the prince, for they had not met since they bade each other farewell, in the fields of Gibeah.

Jonathan soon saw that David was in great fear of Saul, and very sorrowful. Jonathan tried to encourage and comfort his friend. He told him that God would not suffer him to be killed by Saul, but would preserve his life, and make him king over Israel. Jonathan said, that when David became king, he would be his friend, and would be next to him in the government. After they had talked sometime together,

they prayed to God, and then separated. Jonathan went back to Gibeah.

This conduct is the more surprising in Jonathan, as he was a prince of very extraordinary valour, executing the most surprising feats of bravery. He must have known well what the will of God was, in relation to David; and he showed great piety in yielding to that will so cheerfully.

The sun had gone down, and the stars began to twinkle over their heads. David and his men retired into their caves and resting places, among the rocks. The birds which sang to them in the day time, had also gone to rest, and only the screaming of the jackall was heard, or the roar of wild beasts which had come out of their dens in search of food.

CHAPTER XII.

Saul goes to seek David.

DAVID soon travelled southward; for he was afraid to remain long in a place. He passed through some woods and fields, and then went up a mountain near the shores of the Dead sea. From this mountain, there was a delightful prospect.

Upon his right hand, he saw the pleasant country around Hebron, covered with vineyards and olive trees. The brook of Hebron wound around the foot of the mountain, sometimes dashing and foaming over the rocks, and sometimes spreading out into a broad smooth stream in the valleys.

On his left hand, David saw the Dead sea, that great lake which God caused to flow over the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, on account of the wickedness of the

inhabitants. It is sixty-seven miles long, and seventeen broad, and is surrounded by sharp rocky mountains. Nothing green grows upon these mountains, nor upon the sandy shores of the lake ; for God has made it a barren spot, that it may remain a memorial of the wickedness of the people who once lived here, and of the dreadful manner in which they were punished.

When David and his companions had gone a few miles farther, they came to a high hill. It was the hill of Hachilah. There were many rocks at this place, and caves, where they could hide themselves ; so they remained, and tried to make themselves as comfortable as they could. I suppose they made their beds out of leaves, or by spreading their cloaks or slight beds on the hard rocks.

They were exposed to danger from serpents, which creep about in such solitary

places, and might have bitten them when they were asleep; and also from wild beasts, such as lions, bears, and leopards. I dare say David often heard them roaring about him, when he was lying upon his hard bed, and thinking over some of his beautiful Psalms. Perhaps this is the reason why he so often compared his enemies to wild beasts.

In the mean time, the people of the city of Ziph, knowing that David was in their neighbourhood, had determined to inform Saul. Some of them went to the king, and told him that David was at the hill of Hachilah, and offered to conduct him and his army to the place. Saul was very glad, and thanked them. He immediately collected an army, and went with the men into the land of Judah.

When David heard that the Ziphites had betrayed him to Saul, he composed the

fifty-fourth Psalm, in which he declares his confidence in God, in spite of the treachery of men.

David, hearing that Saul was near, went into a mountain in the wilderness of Maon. Saul immediately followed him, and ordered his men to surround the mountain. Now, if you will look on the map, at the place where David was, you will see that he was in great danger. I suppose that he was on the east side of the mountain. He could not go far eastward, without plunging into the Dead sea. Saul and his men had spread themselves around the other sides of the mountain, and were attempting to fill up the passages to the north and south, so that David could not possibly escape.

David could have fought with Saul, and perhaps conquered him; for there were now a great many brave men with David.

But he did not think it right to fight against his king. It is probable that many of David's men had their wives and children to remove, which made it much more difficult to escape.

Saul began to think that his malicious designs would be accomplished, and that David was entirely in his power. But God heard David's prayers, and took care of him, when he could not take care of himself. Just then, a messenger came to the king in great haste, and told him that the Philistines had come into the country ; and Saul was obliged to go away and fight the Philistines.

David soon went still further southward, into the desert of Engedi. He passed near the city of Engedi, which has many pleasant gardens and vineyards around it. In these gardens and vineyards, a beautiful plant, called camphire, or alhenna, grew

very abundantly. It is a tall shrub, bearing clusters of yellow and white flowers on scarlet flower stalks. It is a splendid flower, and very fragrant, and is the most favourite nosegay of the ladies in the eastern countries.

David might not enter these cultivated fields, but turned aside, and ascended one of the barren mountains, on the southern shores of the Dead sea. David and his men walked sadly along, over the sandy soil, among the high rocky peaks of these mountains. Dark, gloomy caverns, fit places for wild beasts and poisonous serpents, were the only shelter they could find. The wild goats were climbing the steep precipices, and the eagles built their nests upon the highest rocks.

I think David and his men must have found the time pass tediously on these wild hills; but they were obliged to go every

day in search of food and water, for no nourishing vegetables grew in this desert, and no clear streams trickled down the rocks.

When they all met, they could converse and pray together. They were very fond of music, and we may suppose that at evening, when the moon was shining on the Dead sea, and its salt waves breaking on the shore, they used to sit together among the rocks, and sing some of David's psalms; such as that beautiful one the 144th.

It was necessary that, in this wilderness, large fires should be kindled near them, to keep off wild beasts. When they talked with each other, they were grave, and spoke wisely. They did not laugh and jest, as is common in this country. They only spoke when they had something sensible to say, and they said it in as few words

as possible. Sometimes they talked in poetry. They were so much accustomed to speak poetically, that they could do it without taking any pains. This was especially true of David.

David taught them much about God and his works. He spoke of his greatness and goodness, and encouraged them by repeating his promise, that David should certainly be king of Israel. He told them that they must wait patiently to have this promise fulfilled, and not to complain of their present distress and danger.

But Saul did not suffer them to remain quiet, even in this desolate place. When he had driven the Philistines from the country, he chose three thousand soldiers, and went among the rocks of Engedi, to seek David. While his men were climbing the precipices, and looking all around the mountains for David, Saul went into a

cave to rest himself. He quietly composed himself, supposing that he was alone, and without a thought of danger.

David and his men were concealed in the sides of the cave. They saw their enemy in their power. Some of them grasped their swords, and the recollection of the injuries they had received from Saul, caused their eyes to flash with anger. They turned towards their commander, waiting only for a word from him, before they rushed forward to strike the blow. He gave no order. "See," said they to him, "God has delivered your enemy into your hand."

David silently approached Saul. He drew his sword from its scabbard. As it moved, his men expected to see the king pierced to the heart. No; David has only cut off the fringed corner of Saul's robe; and he is now sorry that he has taken so

great a liberty with his king; and he said to his men, "the Lord forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the Lord's anointed, to stretch forth my hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the Lord." Though his men were eager to kill Saul, that they might escape from these frightful deserts, and return to their friends and home, yet David restrained them. This shows that he had great influence over those who were around him.

When Saul went out of the cave, David followed him, and called out, "my lord, the king." Saul turned back, and saw David; and David bowed himself so that his face touched the ground. "Wherefore," said he, "hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold David seeketh thy hurt?"

David knew that there were wicked slanderers and tale-bearers about Saul, who tried to prejudice him against David.

David could now prove to Saul, that he did not wish to injure him. He held up the skirt of Saul's robe, and said, "Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the Lord hath delivered thee to-day into my hand in the cave: and some bade me kill thee; but mine eye spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth my hand against my lord; for he is the Lord's anointed. Moreover, my father, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see that there is neither evil nor transgression in my hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest my soul to take it. The Lord therefore be judge, and judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thy hand."

Saul was so much affected by hearing of the danger he had been in, and by Da-

vid's generosity, that he wept; and he said, "Is this thy voice, my son David? Thou art more righteous than I, for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil." Saul told David that he knew he would become king of Israel, as God had said, and begged David to promise to be kind to the children of Saul. David promised Saul. Saul went home with his army, and David and his men returned to the cave.

You will think, perhaps, that Saul now felt and acted more kindly towards David. But we shall soon see that he forgot his own danger in the cave, and David's generosity, and sought, with as much fury as ever, to take away his life.

Though David was thankful to God for saving him, yet he knew he could not place any confidence in Saul. David was now twenty-seven years of age. About this

time he wrote the fifty-seventh Psalm. The sixty-third Psalm is one of the beautiful poems he composed while wandering in the dry, sandy deserts of Engedi, as a morning song.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Death of Samuel.

Soon after this, the prophet Samuel died in Ramah, about 1100 years before the birth of Christ. He was a very old and very good man. He had governed the people many years before Saul became king, and they were very fond of him. The people still continued to love Samuel as a father, for Saul was so wicked they could neither love him, nor trust in him. The news of Samuel's death was immediately spread throughout the whole country. As

the people heard, they wept and hastened to Ramah to be present at his burial. They came in multitudes from every part of the land. Those who lived at the foot of Lebanon, a range of high mountains in the north, that are always covered with snow, were not prevented by the length of the journey from coming to look once more upon the face of their beloved friend and father. From the shores of the Mediterranean sea, and the banks of the Jordan, and along the borders of the Dead sea they came ; men and women crowding the roads that led to Ramah, weeping and singing mournful songs. The city could hardly contain all who filled its streets and looked out at the windows, and leaned over the railing around the roofs. In the house of Samuel continual sounds of mourning were heard, especially from the apartments of the women. All the female

relatives sat in a circle on the floor around the chief mourners. They were silent, while some women at a little distance sung songs in praise of the prophet who was dead. When they ceased, the mourners arose and ran about the room with melancholy shrieks, wringing their hands, tearing their garments, and throwing ashes upon their heads. The chief mourner sat still, in the centre, weeping and tearing her hair. It was not the children of Samuel alone who were sorrowful, for all the people lamented him, saying, "Alas my father?" Funeral songs were sung, and the Levites played upon their musical instruments. We do not know what the songs were, but perhaps, as all the multitude of the Israelites stood around the grave of their friend, they joined in singing the ninetieth Psalm, which had been written by Moses several hundred years before.

CHAPTER XIV.

David goes to the desert.

DAVID heard of the death of Samuel from some of the people that went to Ramah out of the south-western part of Judah. Now that his best friend was gone, he was still more afraid of Saul, and he left the land of Judah and went in a south-westerly direction, to the desert of Paran. This was a part of the great desert through which Moses and the Israelites passed, when he led them from Egypt to the land of Canaan. David and his companions travelled over a sandy plain. The heat of the sun was great, and their feet were almost blistered by the burning sand. I suppose they had camels to carry their baggage, and on which the women and children could ride when they were weary.

These animals are very useful in the desert. Their feet are soft and flabby, and do not sink into the sand like the hard hoofs of many other animals. God has so made them, that they can go a long time without drinking. They also eat but little, which is very convenient in the desert, where there are few springs of water, and but little grass. Thus the party marched forward, though very hot and weary. Whenever a wind arose they were covered with clouds of fine sand and dust. But I do not know how they could stop, till they came to a place where a spring of water was gushing out of the earth under a few trees. Around this there would be some grass for the camels. Here they all stopped and made their camels kneel down while they took off their burdens. There were no caves, so it was necessary to set up tents. They drove long poles into the

ground opposite each other, and then drew cloth over their tops and sides, and were then sheltered from the sun in the day time, and the dew at night. Though the heat was very great, beautiful lizards of the most brilliant colours were running about or basking in the sun all the day long. Even the children were not afraid of them, for they were perfectly harmless. But some of the most terrible creatures that are found in these deserts are scorpions. They are small animals, a few inches in length, which crawl about on the ground, and sometimes fasten themselves to bed clothes and sting persons who are asleep. Their sting is very poisonous and causes death in a short time. David speaks of these scorpions in some of his songs, and compares them to wicked men.

M

CHAPTER XV.

Story of Nabal.

IN this dreary wilderness, David and his men were distressed from want of food. They knew not what to do, till David recollected a very rich man who owned a great deal of land on mount Carmel. This was not mount Carmel in the northern part of Palestine, but a smaller mountain west of the Dead sea, and near the wilderness of Maon. When David and his men were in the neighbourhood a short time before this, Nabal had three thousand sheep scattered over his large pastures in Carmel. The pastures were distant from Nabal's house; and there were constantly many shepherds in the fields watching the sheep. David and his men had guarded the shepherds and the sheep, and kept them from being

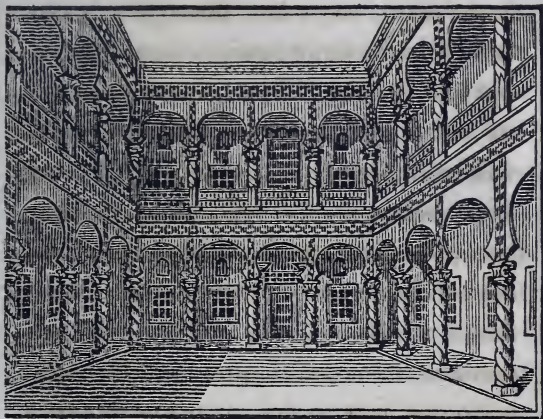
injured by wicked men and wild beasts. Nabal's flocks would have been in great danger, if David had not protected them ; for there were many tribes of people about Palestine who lived by robbing ; often making distant journeys for that purpose. As they went about in great numbers, they could only be driven away or kept at a distance by armed men.

David now heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep, and he knew therefore that it was a time of feasting with him ; and that he would have a great deal of food in his house. David sent ten young men with a respectful message to Nabal, telling him how he had guarded Nabal's shepherds, and asking for some provisions.

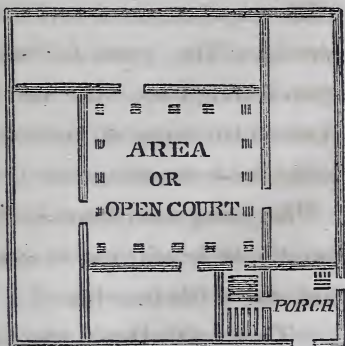
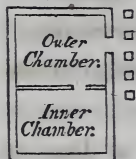
The young men went to Nabal's house at mount Carmel. It was the hottest season of the year. There was no rain for several weeks, and not even a cloud. When

they came to the mountains of Judah they found that most of the delicate flowers that had covered the earth at the time of harvest, were dried up by the sun. The grass also was scorched and yellow, except in the coolest places. There was no barley or wheat waving upon the hills ; they had been reaped and gathered into store-houses. But the trees in the gardens were loaded with tempting fruit, fine peaches, nectarines, and mulberries ; and the ripe figs were dropping from the early fig tree. This was a season of plenty. Large melons lay upon the ground, clusters of green grapes hung from the vines, and the rich gum called balm of Gilead, was flowing out of the balsam tree.

The young men came to the rich man's house, and knocked at the gate. I suppose that Nabal's house was like the houses of other great men in the east ; if so, David's



Section



Plan.

messengers were led through a narrow porch, into a large square court which was open to the sky. The house was built on all sides of this court, with windows and balconies facing the court. There were many rooms in the house, but the court was pleasanter, during the hot season, than any of them, and here the master of the house, and his friends, and servants, were spending a few days in pleasure. The court was paved with marble. In the middle there was often a fountain of water, surrounded with a spot of green turf with flowers and shrubs. The water fell into a basin and then trickled over the marble pavement. Around this fountain were seats, and near it the table was to be set for supper.

The young men delivered their message ; and the style of it shows something of the customs of the Israelites.

“ Thus saith David the son of Jesse to

him that liveth in prosperity. Peace be both to thee, and peace be to thy house, and peace be unto all that thou hast. And now I have heard that thou hast shearers ; now, thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there aught missing unto them all the while they were in Carmel. Ask thy young men, and they will show thee ; wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes ; (for we come in a good day ;) give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thy hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David.”

Nabal was a haughty, passionate man, and very covetous. He gave a contemptuous answer to the young men.—“ Who is David ? and who is the son of Jesse ? there be many servants now-a-days that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my

shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be ?”

The messengers returned and told David what Nabal had said. Then David was very angry. He ordered four hundred of his men to put on their swords and follow him. They marched quickly towards Nabal’s house, intending to punish him for his unkindness.

The servants of Nabal were grieved when they heard their master speak so harshly to David’s messengers. They feared that David would be angry ; and one of them went to Abigail, Nabal’s wife, and told her the whole—how David had protected their property, and how vile the conduct of Nabal was, saying, that he was such a son of Belial that a man could not speak to him.

Abigail was a beautiful woman, and very sensible and prudent. Expecting

that David would resent her husband's treatment, she soon determined what to do. She took two hundred loaves of bread, and two bottles, made of skin, full of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn or grain, and a hundred clusters of raisins, and sent her servants to offer them as a present to David. Abigail soon followed them, riding on



an ass, as is customary in that country. At the foot of a hill she met David and his

company. He was angry, and was hastening forward to take revenge upon Nabal.

As soon as Abigail saw him, she alighted, and bowed herself, so that her forehead touched the ground: this was about the same in Palestine that it would be in this country to bow or courtesy very low. In the respectful manner of speaking which is common in eastern countries, she said to David,—

“ Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be: and let thy handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thy handmaid. Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name is, so is he: * Nabal is his name, and folly is with him: but I thy handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send. Now therefore, my lord, as the Lord liveth, and

* *Nabal*, in Hebrew, means, *foolish*.

as thy soul liveth, seeing the Lord hath withholden thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal. And now this blessing which thy handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord. I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thy handmaid: for the Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the Lord, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days. Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul; but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God; and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as out of the middle of a sling. And it shall come to pass, when the Lord shall have done to my lord according to all the good

that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel ; That this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself ; but when the Lord shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thy handmaid."

Abigail's kind and prudent address overcame David's anger. He had determined to kill all Nabal's family, but he now remembered that it was wrong to revenge himself, and especially to kill so many innocent persons for the fault of one man. He said to Abigail, " Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me : and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with my own hands." He then told her that she might return

in peace, and that her present was accepted.

When Abigail came to her house, she heard the sounds of feasting and merriment. Nabal and his guests were eating and drinking; and Nabal drank wine till he was intoxicated. So Abigail told him nothing that night. In the morning, when she saw that he was sober, she told him of the danger they had all been in, on account of his unkindness to David. David would have come to fight with him, if she had not prevented it; and Nabal would have been unable to defend himself, as he, and most of the men with him were intoxicated with wine. Though Nabal had been so rash as to expose himself to this danger, yet he could not bear to think of it even after it was over. His heart sunk within him. God caused him to reflect so bitterly upon his conduct, and the evils with

which he had been threatened, that after lingering ten days in a miserable state, he died. Sometime after Nabal died, David was married to Abigail.

CHAPTER XVI.

David visits the camp of Saul.

ABOUT this time, David returned to the wilderness of Ziph. Perhaps he went there that he might be in the neighbourhood of a cultivated country ; where he could more easily find provisions for the six hundred men and their families who were with him. But the people of the city of Ziph, discovered him, and a second time betrayed him to Saul. Saul immediately came with an army of three thousand men to seek David. David, hearing that the king was near, sent out spies to discover the

place where he was encamped. After the spies had returned and told him of the place, David asked, "who will go with me to-night to the camp of the king." And Abishai, his nephew, said, "I will go."

They went together. It was night when they came to the camp of Saul. The king was asleep in the centre of the en-



campment; and all the people were lying around him. David and his nephew advanced silently into the centre of the cir-

cle, and stood by the side of Saul. He was slumbering quietly, without dreaming of danger. His spear was stuck in the ground by his pillow, and a cruse of water stood by his side. As they looked at him, Abishai said, "God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day; now, therefore, let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once."

And David said, "destroy him not, for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless." David also said, "As the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into the battle and perish. The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth my hand against the Lord's anointed; but I pray thee, take now the spear that is at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us go."

Still Saul did not awake, for the Lord

had caused a deep sleep to fall upon him and his men. David took his spear and cruse of water, and hastened away to a hill at some distance. Standing on the top of the hill, he called loudly to Abner, the general of Saul's army ; and Abner awoke and answered him.

Then David reproached him for sleeping while he should have guarded his king. Abner had the character of being a great general, and the protector of the king. David thus called to him in ridicule, "Art not thou a valiant man? and who is like to thee in Israel? Wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord. This thing is not good that thou hast done. As the Lord liveth, ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the Lord's anointed. And now see where the king's spear is,

and the cruse of water that was at his bolster. And Saul knew David's voice, and said, Is this thy voice, my son David? and David said, It is my voice, my lord, O king."

David complained to Saul on account of his coming with an army to seek a person of so little consequence, and humbly compared himself to an innocent partridge, which men hunt upon the mountains.

Saul, notwithstanding his bad temper, was affected by David's kindness, and he called to him from the distant hill where he stood, "Blessed be thou my son David; thou shalt both do great things, and shalt prevail."

Saul again seemed penitent, and spoke to David in a kind manner. But David had known him too long to trust him. He requested that a person might be sent to take Saul's spear, and prayed to God to

be kind to him, as he had been kind to Saul. This was the last time that David and Saul ever met.

CHAPTER XVII.

David goes to live among the Philistines.

DAVID considered Saul's hatred to him so bitter, and his frequent treacherous conduct to him, left him so little ground of reliance on his promises, that he concluded he could not live in safety in that country, and he began to think of escaping from him into the land of the Philistines. He became weary of being driven about from place to place, in the land of Judah, and even preferred to live among a people who were idolatrous and wicked. It was wrong for David to be impatient, after God had so kindly taken care of him. But he did

not go till he had, in the hundred and forty-first Psalm, prayed earnestly to God to keep him from being led astray by the evil examples of the Philistines.

He again sought protection from Achish the king of Gath. For a time, he and his six hundred men, with their families, remained in Gath ; and Saul, hearing of his being there, gave up any further pursuit. But at length David requested Achish to give them some small city, where they might live by themselves. The king gave them the city of Ziklag, which was south of Gath. There David and his friends would be farther from temptation, and might worship God without exciting so much notice and opposition. After David had removed thither, many more of his countrymen joined themselves to him. Some of these were great warriors, and David had now quite a little army under

his command. Either for the purpose of obtaining support for his numerous dependants, or to obey the command of God, that the Canaanites should be driven out of the land, David frequently led his men against the different tribes of that people who lived in the south of Judah. He utterly destroyed them, and brought away their cattle, and all their property.

David lived in Philistia one year and four months. At the end of that time, the Philistines began to prepare for a war with the Israelites. Achish requested David to come with his men and fight for him. Now David was distressed, and he knew not what to do. He could not fight against his brethren and friends. He dared not refuse Achish. He gave an indirect answer, and Achish understood that he would go, and promised to make him an officer in his army.

Achish had chosen a favourable time to march against Israel. Saul had become very unpopular, on account of the unwise, and imprudent manner in which he had conducted the government.

He was proud and melancholy. He had spent his time and wearied out his army in seeking to discover, and put to death David, who was an innocent man, and one of his own obedient subjects, instead of trying to govern his people well, and defend them against their enemies. Besides, Saul, distressed by a guilty conscience, and fearful apprehensions, had lost his courage and energy. The king of Gath had great reason to hope for success. He collected a large army, and, instead of attacking the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, which bordered on Philistia, marched towards the northern part of the land of Israel. If Saul had been as brave as he once

was, I think he would have endeavoured to prevent the Philistines from going into the very midst of his country. The different divisions of the army of Achish passed on, under the command of the lords of the Philistines, and David and his men followed with the king. David must have been in great perplexity. He probably had not decided what to do. If he fought against his brethren, he would sin against God, be a traitor to his country, and entirely cut himself off from all hope of being ever chosen king by the Israelites.

On the other hand, if he should desert the Philistine army, and join the Hebrews, he would be guilty of great ingratitude and treachery towards Achish, besides exposing himself to danger from Saul. He had brought these evils upon himself, by distrusting God, and placing himself under the protection of a heathen prince, and a

foreigner. His presence in the camp of the Philistines might be known to Saul and Jonathan, and their officers and soldiers. Saul would rejoice now that he could charge David with being an enemy to his country. And Jonathan would be grieved to learn that his chosen friend could fight against him, and the people of God. David probably prayed to God to direct and help him, and God prepared a way for him to escape from his painful situation.

When they reached Aphek, the lords of the Philistines, jealous, perhaps, of the favour shown by their king to David, and suspicious of his honesty, urged Achish to send him back, lest he should betray them to the Hebrews. Achish expressed the utmost confidence in David, but complied with the wishes of the lords, and requested David to leave his army. David was un-

doubtedly much gratified, but he again deceived Achish, by pretending that he did not wish to go. Thus he repeatedly sinned against God through fear of offending the king. And God punished him for it, as we shall presently see.

On the third day after David and his company left the Philistines' camp, they reached Ziklag. There they expected to see their wives and children, and to rest themselves after their weary journey. But what a change! The city lay in ruins. All the houses had been burned, and as they entered the streets, they found them silent and deserted. Not even a child was left to tell them who had done this injury. Their wives and children were carried away, and they knew not whither to go to seek them. Then all the people wept and lamented, till they had no more power to weep. Anger followed grief; and at last

they began to reproach David as if he had been the cause of their troubles. They talked about stoning him, which was a common way of putting criminals to death. This was very hard, when David's family had been carried away with the rest; and he could not have prevented it. But David thought of God, and was comforted; we may suppose such sentiments as he expresses in the hundred and forty-third Psalm, then occupied his mind. David commanded Abiathar the high priest, to bring the ephod. He inquired of God, "Shall I pursue after this troop? Shall I overtake them?" and God answered him "pursue: for thou shalt overtake them and recover all."

This encouraged the little band of Israelites. They instantly went southward, as far as the brook Besor. Here two hundred of the men were so faint, from their

long marches, that they could go no farther, but the rest passed on. In a little time, they found a man in the field, who was fainting, and almost dead with hunger. They gave him food and water, and he revived, and was able to speak. David then asked him who he was. He answered that he was a servant to an Amalekite, who had, three days before, left him sick in the fields. He had eaten nothing all that time. He told David that his master belonged to the company who had burned the city of Ziklag, and robbed some other places. He consented to conduct David and his men to the Amalekites. They went southward towards the country of Amalek, and soon found the company whom they sought. The Amalekites had placed no sentinels around their camp. They thought there was no danger, because the Hebrews and the Philistines

were at a great distance, fighting each other; and they supposed there was no one to disturb them. They were scattered over the fields, some of them eating and drinking, and others dancing. David found it easy to conquer them. He, and his friends took back their wives and children, and all the property that the Amalekites had carried away from Ziklag, and the other places which they had robbed. The Israelites went back rejoicing, driving before them the cattle which they had taken from the Amalekites. Soon they came to the brook of Besor, and the two-hundred men whom they had left there, came forward to meet them. David spoke kindly to these men. But there were some covetous persons in his party, who said that those who did not go with them, should not have any of the goods that had been recovered. David mildly reproved

these wicked men, and commanded that the property should be equally divided among all his followers. Out of part of the things which he had taken, David sent presents to some of the principal men of Judah, especially to those who had been kind to him when he was wandering among their mountains.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Saul's visit to the witch of Endor, and an account of the Battle of Gilboa.

Soon after David was sent away by Achish, the Philistines removed their camp from Aphek to Shunem. This was seventeen miles south-west of the lake of Genesareth, and about the same distance north of the city of Shechem. Saul had, before this, gathered together his army on the

south-east from Shunem. He now removed and pitched his camp by the fountain of Jezreel, at a short distance from the Philistines. Preparations were made for a great battle.

Saul was very unhappy, because God was angry with him. He inquired of God what success he should have in the battle. I do not know how he inquired: he could not do in the right way, for he had murdered most of the priests except Abiathar, who had fled to David. God did not answer him, or take any notice of his inquiries, and Saul became greatly troubled. The night before the battle, he directed his servants to find him a woman who was supposed to have power to call back to this world, the spirits of persons who were dead. Saul had, before this, commanded that every witch in the country should be put to death, but his servants now inform-

ed him that there was one living privately at Endor, not very far from Saul's camp. "And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up whom I shall name unto thee."

The woman did not know Saul, but she told him that she feared he had come to deceive her, and betray her to the king. Saul promised that she should receive no injury. The woman then asked him whom he wished to be called from the dead. Saul answered, bring me up Samuel. The witch began to practise her arts, but probably soon saw something which she did not expect, and which convinced her that the king was present. She called out in

great alarm, "why hast thou deceived me, for thou art Saul."

"And the king said unto her, Be not afraid; for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth. And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up: and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself. And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do."

Samuel told Saul that God would punish

him for his wickedness, by permitting the Philistines to conquer the Israelites. He said that Saul and his sons would be slain on the next day, and that the kingdom would be taken from Saul's family, and given to David. When Saul heard this, he was much distressed.

On the morning of the same day that David returned to Ziklag, with the spoils which he had taken from the Amalekites, the Hebrews and the Philistines met, and fought together near the fountain of Jezreel. The armies were divided into different companies, and each company was commanded by a captain. Part of these companies were to begin to fight before the armies came close together. These were armed with bows and arrows, and javelins, and slings for throwing stones. After them came the principal part of the army who were to fight more closely.

They used spears and swords, and carried shields upon their left arm to protect them from the weapons of their enemies. It was common among the Hebrews for the priests to encourage the soldiers, and blow the silver trumpet just before a battle. But this could not now be done in Saul's army, because he had killed the priests.

The Hebrews had only infantry, or foot soldiers, for God had forbidden them to own many horses, but the Philistines had companies of horsemen, and those who rode in chariots. Chariots sometimes had long sharp scythes extending out from the centre of the wheels with their sharp edges towards their enemies. After the two armies had fought a little while, the Israelites began to give way. They fled toward their former camp at Gilboa, and the Philistines followed with their chariots and horsemen. When they reached

Gilboa there was a dreadful battle. Jonathan was slain with his two brothers and a multitude of Israelites. Saul was wounded by the arrows that had been shot at him by the archers. He was covered with dust and blood, and wearied with his long marches. He saw the dead bodies of his sons and his subjects lying around him, and heard the shouting of the Philistines, and the noise of their chariots. He told his armour bearer to draw his sword, and kill him, for he feared the Philistines would insult him, and put him to a painful death. But his armour bearer refused to plunge a sword into the bosom of his king. Then Saul wickedly fell upon his own sword and killed himself; and his armour bearer followed his bad example, and died with him.

The few of the Hebrew army who remained, were scattered when their king died and the inhabitants of the neigh-

bouring cities left their houses, and fled into another part of the country, And the Philistines went and lived in their cities. The next morning the Philistines came to the place where they had fought, and found Saul dead. They cut off his head, and took off his armour, and sent them into the country of Philistia, to be placed in the temples of their idols. The bodies of Saul and his sons they fastened to the walls of Bethshan, a city at a little distance south of the lake of Gennesareth, near the river Jordan. This was probably one of the cities that the Israelites had deserted. It was afterwards called Scythopolis.

Jabesh Gilead was a city east of the river Jordan, at some distance from Bethshan. When the people of that city heard how the bodies of their king, and his sons had been treated, some of the bravest of

their men, went in the night to Bethshan, and took the bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall, and brought them to Jabesh Gilead, without being discovered by the Philistines. The people of Jabesh Gilead burned the bodies, and buried the bones under a tree, and fasted and mourned seven days. Some of the ancient nations used always to burn the bodies of dead persons, and then collect their bones into an urn which they buried, or placed in a tomb. But this was not the custom of the Hebrews at the time of Saul's death. They burned the bodies of Saul and his sons, that the Philistines might not again obtain them.

On the third day after David's return from fighting the Amalekites, a young man came to him at Ziklag, in great haste. His clothes were rent, and he had earth upon his head. These were the signs of

mourning, and David asked what news he brought. He replied, that the Israelites had been conquered, and many of them were killed, and Saul and Jonathan were dead. David asked him how he knew that Saul and Jonathan were dead. The young man answered that he was upon mount Gilboa after the battle, and saw Saul leaning upon his spear, and the Philistine chariots and horsemen were following after him. He said that Saul called out to him, and begged he would kill him before the Philistines could come nearer. He told David that he complied with Saul's request, and killed him, and he gave David Saul's crown and bracelet which he had brought. The young man was an Amalekite. It is not known whether the story he told was true. He might possibly have seen Saul just after he had fallen upon his sword, when he was not quite dead, and given

him another stroke which killed him. But it is plain that the young man thought David wished so much to be king, that he would reward the person who should bring him the news of Saul's death. But he was mistaken. David told him that he must be punished for killing the man whom God had anointed king of Israel. And he ordered him to be slain. David and all his men rent their clothes, and mourned and wept, and fasted till evening, for Saul and Jonathan, and the people who were slain with them. And David, unmindful of past injuries, wrote this beautiful elegy, which, probably, has no equal in any language.

The glory of Israel is slain upon the high places
How are the mighty fallen !

Tell it not in Gath,

Publish it not in the streets of Askelon ;

Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice

Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

Ye mountains of Gilboa,

Let no dew nor rain fall upon you ;

Let your fields yield no offerings ;
For there was thrown away the shield of the mighty,
The shield of Saul, as if it had not been anointed
with oil.

From the blood of the wounded,
From the strength of the mighty,
The bow of Jonathan turned not back,
The sword of Saul returned not in vain.
Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their
lives,

In their death they were not divided
They were swifter than eagles,
They were stronger than lions.
Ye daughters of Israel, lament for Saul,
Who clothed you in scarlet and splendour ;
Who adorned your garments with golden embroi-
dery.

How are the mighty fallen.
Jonathan falls in the midst of battle,
He dies on thy high places.
I am distressed for thee my brother Jonathan,
Greatly did I love thee :
Thy love for me was wonderful,
Greater than the love of women.
How are the mighty fallen,
And their weapons of war perished.

CHAPTER XIX.

David chosen king of Judah.

As Saul was now dead, David expected that the Israelites would choose him for their king. But he would not even leave Ziklag, and go into his own country, without asking direction from God. He inquired of God whether he should go into any of the cities of Judah, and God told him to go to Hebron. So David went there with his family, and all his men with their families went with him. Hebron was in a beautiful plain in the middle of the tribe of Judah, about seventeen miles south of Bethlehem. It was a very old city, and had formerly been called Kirjath-arba. Abraham, who was the father of all the Israelites, had once lived in a grove of Terebinth trees, which was near this city.

His tent was pitched under one of those large trees, and the tents of his family and servants were pitched around him. He had a multitude of cattle and sheep that fed in the rich pastures of the plain of Mamre. North of Hebron was a pool, and a pleasant stream. David had not been here long, before the chief men of the tribe of Judah met at Hebron, and anointed him king over their tribe. As soon as David was king over Judah, he sent to the people of Jabesh Gilead, though they lived a great way off, on the other side of the river Jordan, to thank them for the kindness they had shown to the bodies of Saul and his sons. It gratified the people to have him show so much respect to their former king.

But the other tribes of Israel did not yet choose David for their king, because that one of Saul's sons was alive, whose name was Ishbosheth. Abner, Saul's cousin, and

the general of his armies, determined that Ishbosheth should be king, though he had a weak mind, and was not fit to govern the people. But Abner had great talents, and was very ambitious, and he thought that he could govern for Ishbosheth, and be almost a king himself. So he took Ishbosheth over the Jordan to Mahanaim, near the river Jabbok, in Gilead, and the chiefs of all the tribes of Israel, except the tribe of Judah, met there, and made him their king.

When David began to reign over the tribe of Judah, he was thirty years old. He reigned two years in Hebron before there was any war between him and Ishbosheth. Then Abner came with an army to Gibeon, in Benjamin, to fight against Judah, and make them submit to Ishbosheth. David sent out an army to meet him, under the command of Joab, his nephew.

There was a great battle, in which Joab gained the victory, but his brother Asahel was killed. After this there was a long war of five years and a half, between David and Ishbosheth. At last, Abner found that David was very successful, and had great influence with the people, and he determined not to oppose him any longer. He wickedly deserted Ishbosheth, and went to David, and promised to bring all the tribes of Israel to acknowledge him as king. After talking with David, he went away, intending to do this. But Joab was angry at Abner, for killing his brother Asahel, and was, perhaps, afraid that if Abner came into the service of David, he would be as great a man in the army as himself. He sent for Abner to come back to Hebron, and took him aside by the gate of the city, pretending that he wished to speak with him privately, and there mur-

dered him. David disapproved of Joab's conduct, but dared not punish him, because he had so much influence with the army. When Ishbosheth heard that Abner was dead, he was troubled. All his friends were discouraged because they had lost their leader. Two of the captains of Ishbosheth determined to murder him, thinking that they should in that way, gain favour with David. They went into his chamber, as he lay upon his bed at noon, and killed him, and carried his head to David. They supposed that David would reward them for their cruelty. But he ordered them to be put to death.

CHAPTER XX.

David chosen King of all Israel.

SOON after this, the heads of the tribes, and all the chief officers of Israel, came to Hebron to anoint David king over the whole country. And many companies of soldiers, from each of the different tribes, marched to Hebron, to assist at the ceremony. They all remained three days with David, feasting and rejoicing.

We may now see the reason why God had caused David to pass through so many trials. It was to make him more pious, and wise, and prudent, that he might be a suitable king for the Israelites. Though they had been several hundred years in their country, they had never yet been in a quiet, settled state. It had been the command of God, that the Canaanites should

be driven entirely out of the land ; but there were still many cities in their possession. The Israelites were often obliged to fight with them, and with other nations in the neighbourhood. Sometimes the different tribes of the Hebrews would fight with one another ; and there had been a great deal of war and confusion in the country. God had given the people a law, but they were not in a situation to obey every part of it. They needed a king to conquer their enemies, and to unite them all together, and to govern them by the laws which God gave to Moses. They also needed a king, who would prepare a place where they might all meet together, and worship God ; for the people had become very inattentive to their duties towards God, during the latter part of Saul's reign. God had chosen David, and prepared him to be such a king.

There was a city on the northern boundary of Judah, and the southern boundary of Benjamin, which was still possessed by the Jebusites, one of the tribes of the Canaanites. It had formerly been called Salem, but was now called Jebus. David afterwards called it Jerusalem. He wanted this place, to make it the capital city of the land of Israel. It was, besides, his duty to drive away the Canaanites. Accordingly, he determined to endeavour to take this city. The Jebusites had built a strong fort on mount Zion, which was in the south-western part of the city, and there were many armed men in the fort. It was dangerous to go against the fort, because the men who defended it were brave; but Joab led a company of men up to it, and they fought against the Jebusites, and gained a victory. David then made Joab the general of the Hebrew army.

David soon went with his family and attendants to live at Jerusalem. It was a fine city. It was afterwards very large, and was built on several hills; mount Zion on the south-west, mount Moriah, on the south-east, and mount Acra, on the north-west. South of the city was the valley of Hinnom. On the east was the mount of Olives, a beautiful mountain, with three peaks, covered with olive trees. The valley of Jehoshaphat lay between the mount of Olives, and the city, and the brook Kedron ran from north to south through the valley. David built a palace for himself on mount Zion, I think it was very splendid. It was built around a large court, paved with marble. Perhaps there was a fountain in the centre of the court with tall palm trees growing around it. And I suppose it had pleasant porticos facing the court, and a flat roof, with seats

and walks upon it: for this was the common way of building houses in that country. David had many sons, and he built houses for them all on mount Zion; and that part of the city became very handsome and populous.

As soon as the Philistines heard that the Israelites were united under a king, they sent their armies into the country. But David with his soldiers met and conquered them. Once more they came to fight with David, but God helped him again to conquer, and drive them out of the country.

CHAPTER XXI.

Removal of the Ark.

DAVID began to think of having the ark of God brought to Jerusalem. The Ark of the Covenant was a box, about three feet

and a half long, two feet and a half broad, and two feet and a half high. It was made of wood, covered all over with gold. The lid was made of pure gold, and was called the mercy seat. In the ark were two tables of stone, upon which were written the ten commandments that God gave to Moses. On the ark, at each end of it, stood two golden cherubim, spreading out their wings, and leaning over the mercy seat, as if to look into the ark. The Holy of Holies, or the inner part of the tabernacle, was the place for the ark. But many years before, when the Israelites were fighting with the Philistines, they took the ark from the tabernacle, and carried it into the army. The Philistines were victorious, and obtained possession of the ark, and placed it in the temple of one of their idols. But God punished them so severely, that they soon sent it back to the

Hebrews. It was carried to Kirjath-jearim, a city in the north-west part of Judah, where it had remained ever since. Kirjath-jearim was not far from Jerusalem. David determined to go thither, and bring the ark to mount Zion, where he had prepared a tabernacle to place it in.

He gathered together thirty thousand of the principal people of the country, and they went to the house of Abinadab, on a hill in Kirjath-jearim, and brought out the ark. They placed it on a cart, drawn by oxen, and Uzzah and Ahio, the two sons of Abinadab, drove the cart. This was not the right way. God had commanded that the Levites should carry the ark, by taking hold of the golden staves that were fastened to it. They were not permitted to touch it, because it was very sacred. David and the rest of the Hebrews had not sufficiently studied the law of

God, before they attempted to remove the ark. They went a little way, playing on instruments of music, and perhaps singing parts of the sixty-eighth Psalm, which David had written. But soon the oxen shook the cart, and the ark was in danger of falling. Uzzah put out his hand, and took hold of it, and God punished him by instantly striking him dead. Then David was afraid, and dared not bring the ark any further. He carried it into the house of Obed-edom, which was near, and sent all the people home. The ark remained there three months, in the house of Obed-edom.

David heard that God had blessed the family of Obed-edom ever since the ark had been with them. This encouraged him to make another attempt to bring it to Jerusalem. Again he sent, and collected together a great multitude from every part

of the country. Presently, a long and joyful procession was seen moving from the house of Obed-edom, towards Jerusalem. They had gone but a few steps, when David commanded them to stop, and the priests offered sacrifices to God. The ark was borne on the shoulders of the Kohathites, one of the families of the Levites. Large companies of Levites, who were singers, went before, followed by other companies of Levites, who played on all kinds of musical instruments. Then came a multitude who were collected from every part of the land to do honour to the ark of God. There were the princes of the different tribes, with dignified and thoughtful countenances, the grey-haired elders, and military officers, who were accustomed to command. As they passed on towards Jerusalem, the hills and valleys rang and echoed with their songs of joy. The priests

blew the silver trumpets, the Levites played on their harps and psalteries, and cymbals, and several songs of praise, which David had written, were sung. At last they came in sight of mount Zion; its walls and palaces glittering in the sun. As they went up the mountain, it is supposed that they sung the twenty-fourth Psalm; the different choirs answering each other.

1st CHOIR.—Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord,
And who shall stand in his holy place?

2d CHOIR.—He that hath clean hands and a pure heart,
Who hath not inclined his soul to falsehood,
Nor sworn deceitfully.

When they came to the gates of the tabernacle that king David had prepared for the ark, the Levites probably separated into two choirs, and the ark was carried in between them, while they sang.

BOTH CHOIRS.—Lift up your heads, O ye gates!
And be ye lift up ye everlasting doors;
And the King of Glory shall enter.

1st CHOIR.—Who is this King of Glory ?

2d CHOIR.—Jehovah, strong and mighty ;

Jehovah mighty in battle.

BOTH CHOIRS.—Lift up your heads, O ye gates !

And be ye lift up ye everlasting doors ;

And the King of Glory shall enter.

1st CHOIR.—Who is this King of Glory ?

2d CHOIR.—The Lord of Hosts, he is the King of
Glory.

When the ark was in its place, David blessed all the people, and distributed refreshments among them. And he commanded the Levites to sing the hundred and fifth Psalm in praise to God. Then the people separated, and went to their homes. King David appointed four thousand Levites to be continually employed in singing praises to God, and playing on musical instruments before the tabernacle. They were divided into companies under the direction of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun.

As soon as David was quietly settled, he

wished to build a house for the worship of God, which should be larger, and more convenient than the tabernacle. He asked the advice of Nathan the prophet, and Nathan advised him to do it. But that very night, God spoke to Nathan, and gave him a message to David. God said that he did not wish David to build him a house ; but still that he would bless him, and bless the people of Israel. He said that one of David's sons, who should be king after David was dead, might build a temple for God. God then made many promises to David and his family. David thanked God for these promises, and wrote several Psalms. It is supposed that the eleventh, forty-fifth, twenty-second, sixteenth, eighteenth, and hundred and tenth Psalms were written about this time.

CHAPTER XXII.

David's wars, and how he governed his kingdom.

AFTER this, David had many wars with the people who lived in the countries about Palestine. He fought with the Philistines who lived south-west of Israel, and with the Edomites, the descendants of Esau, who lived in the south. He also fought with the Moabites and Ammonites, in the east, and with the Syrians, north-east of Palestine, whose capital city was Damascus. All these people he conquered, and made them bring him many rich presents, which is called paying tribute. The silver, and brass, and gold, which the king took from the people whom he had conquered, he laid up for the temple which his son was to build. It is supposed that

David wrote the sixtieth, and hundred and eighth Psalms, as well as the twentieth and twenty-first, after his victories.

Now David was very rich and powerful, and the Israelites were feared and respected by all their neighbours. Joab and Abishai, were brave generals, and David had many great officers about him. Joab was commander in chief of the army, Jehoshaphat was chief judge, Abiathar was high priest, and Seraiah was secretary of state. Benaiah commanded the Cherethites and Pelethites, which were the king's guards. As David's sons became old enough, they also helped him to rule the people.

David then remembered his friendship for Jonathan, and the covenant they had made together. He inquired if any of Jonathan's family were alive, and was told that Mephibosheth, a son of Jonathan, who was lame, was living in retirement on the

eastern side of the river Jordan. The king sent for him, and treated him with great kindness. He gave him all Saul's property, and invited him to eat constantly at the king's table. Ziba, who had been a servant of Saul, was commanded to wait upon Mephibosheth, and to cultivate his land. All Ziba's children were servants to Mephibosheth. After this, Mephibosheth lived at Jerusalem, and sat every day at the table with the king, in his palace on mount Zion.

David reigned forty years over the Israelites. The people had never been so happy before. The Canaanites were conquered and submitted to be ruled by David. All the neighbouring countries were afraid of him, because he was a great warrior. Every morning and evening the smoke of sacrifices rose from the altar on mount Zion, and from the altar which

stood before the tabernacle of Moses, at Gibeon. There songs of praise to God were heard from the choirs of Levites, accompanied by the sound of instruments, the harp, the psaltery, and the cymbal, making loud and cheerful music. David wrote many Psalms to be sung at the worship of the tabernacle, and some others, which we may suppose he sung himself, as he sat alone upon the flat roof of his palace, and looked out upon the beautiful towers and busy streets, and pleasant gardens of Jerusalem. All the people in the country could then go up to Jerusalem three times a year to worship God, as God had commanded, without any fear that their enemies would destroy their cities and villages during their absence. Every man planted his corn, and pruned his olive trees, and trained his vines, and then gathered in his harvest with great joy.

But though David was so much blessed, and was called the “man after God’s own heart,” or the “beloved of the Lord,” yet he sometimes forgot the kindness of his heavenly Father. He neglected his duty, and began to love himself too much, till at last he committed some dreadful sins.

We should not have expected this of David, but he was, in himself, like other men, naturally disposed to do wrong, and easily overcome by temptation. He had long been accustomed to govern others, and to act as he pleased himself. This often makes people proud and wilful, and selfish. As David was exposed to uncommon temptations, he should have been uncommonly watchful, and have constantly prayed to God to keep him from sin. But it is to be feared that, for a time, he forgot to do this.—The kings in eastern countries are accustomed to have more wives than

one, and David had already begun to imitate them, though it was wrong to do so. There was a beautiful woman, the wife of Uriah, an officer in his army, whom David wished to add to the number of his wives. But as she was a married woman, he did not dare to disobey the law so far as to make her his wife, while her husband was alive. David had begun to sin, by breaking the tenth commandment, which forbids us to wish for any thing that belongs to another, or which it is improper for us to have. He now went on to conduct more and more wickedly. Uriah had gone with the army of David to fight against the Ammonites. David sent for him, and gave him a letter to carry back to Joab, the general. In this letter, he directed Joab to put Uriah in the front of the battle, and then leave him, so that he would certainly be killed. Thus David was guilty of causing

to be murdered, one of the best and bravest of his officers. Joab obeyed the orders of the king; Uriah was killed, and Bathsheba became the wife of David.

Though David had sinned so greatly, God did not entirely cast him off, but sent Nathan the prophet, to convince him of his guilt. By the command of God, who had seen all that David had done, and knew every thought of his heart, Nathan now came to the king, and said, “There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: But the poor man had nothing save one little ewe-lamb, which he had brought and nourished up; and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller

unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the way-faring man that was come unto him ; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him."

David was very angry at the conduct of the rich man ; and he said, " As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die. And he shall restore the lamb four-fold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity."

The prophet had told David this parable or story, to show him the wickedness of his own conduct, and bring him to acknowledge it, when he supposed he was condemning another person. "Nathan now said to David, thou art the man." He then repeated the many blessings which God had bestowed upon David, and reproved him for his ingratitude and wickedness in

committing such dreadful sins. The king was struck to the heart, and said, I have sinned against the Lord. He went into his closet and knelt before God, and prayed to him in the words of the fifty-first Psalm. Perhaps he offered the same prayer in the tabernacle.

God forgave David's sin, and gave him his Holy Spirit to comfort him, and help him to live better in future. But as it was known to the people that he had been wicked, and disobeyed God, it was right that they should see him punished for it ; that they might know that God hates sin, and will bring evil upon those who commit it.

David's infant child was immediately taken ill ; and David fasted, and lay all night upon the earth, praying to God, for he knew that it was on account of his own sins, that God had afflicted the child. On

the seventh day the child died, and his friends thought it would break the heart of the father. But David had returned to his duty, and acted with reason. He felt that God was just in taking away his child, and that he was punished far less than he deserved. He arose from his deep affliction, and his servants were amazed. They said to him, "What thing is this that thou hast done? Thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread. And he said, while the child was yet alive, I fasted, and wept: for I said, who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

Thus should we think of our dear friends who die, if we have reason to hope

that they have gone to God. David by this clearly shows that he understood a future state of existence in another world ; and that he, like Abraham, looked for another city, whose builder and maker is God.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Story of Absalom.

DAVID was still further punished for his sins, by the bad conduct of one of his sons. He found it more difficult to make them do right, because he had in one instance, set them a wicked example. His third son was called Absalom. He was a handsome young man, of pleasing manners, and quite artful. He was also very selfish and ambitious, and like many young persons, who have been too much indulged, gave a great deal of trouble to his friends. At last,

when his father was beginning to be old, Absalom thought he would try to be king himself. So he sought in many ways to please the people, and to make them like him better than they did his father. All the courts were held near the gates of the city, where convenient spaces were left, and seats placed for the judges. Absalom used to rise early in the morning, and go to the gates; and when any man came to have a cause tried by the judges, Absalom would ask him many questions, and pretend to be much interested in his affairs. He would flatter the man, and tell him that his cause was right, but that the king would not do him justice. Then he would say, I wish I was judge, then every man's business should be attended to. When any man came near to bow down before Absalom, which was proper, because he was the king's son, and one of the princes of

the land, Absalom would hold out his hand to him, and kiss him. In such ways this wicked young man persuaded many of the people that he was their friend, and would make them a better king than his father. He sent men privately into every part of the country to endeavour to persuade the people to receive him for their king. After he had become very popular, he asked the king's permission to go to Hebron, pretending that he wished to worship God there. The king told him that he might go. When he arrived at Hebron, he sent for all his friends, and began to raise an army to go to Jerusalem, and fight against his father.

When David heard that his beloved son Absalom wished to kill him, and to seize upon his kingdom, he was much distressed. It was so painful to fight with his son, and so difficult to raise an army immediately,

that he determined not to try to defend Jerusalem, but to make his escape. He left Jerusalem with his family. His guards also went with him, and some other soldiers, and many of the people who were his friends. They went into the valley east of Jerusalem, and crossed the brook Kedron. The priests and Levites were there with the ark of God, which they expected to carry with the king. But David commanded the priests to carry back the ark to the tabernacle, for he did not wish to expose it to danger, and he hoped again to return to Jerusalem, and worship God in the Holy place. The priests returned with the ark, and David and his company went up the mount of Olives, on their way towards the river Jordan. It was a sad and mournful procession. David, and the people who were with him, as they went up the mount with slow and solemn steps, wept, covering

their heads for grief. David knew that it was to punish him for his sins, that God had permitted his son to be so wicked and ungrateful. He was sorry for his sins, and confessed them to God. But he trusted that God would deliver him. About this time he composed the hundred and eleventh Psalm.

When the king came to Bahurim, a man by the name of Shimei, came out of the city, and threw stones at him, using very insulting language. Abishai, one of the chief officers, wished to punish Shimei, and said to David, "let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head. But David would not suffer him to do it. He thought of his own rebellious son, and said, "behold, my own son seeks my life, how much more this Benjamite. Let him alone, let him curse. It may be the Lord will look on my affliction, and requite me good for

his cursing this day.” David then composed the seventh Psalm.

When David left Jerusalem, Absalom entered it as king. Ahithophel one of the wisest of David’s counsellors, had joined himself to Absalom, and was ready to give him all the aid in his power. David was much distressed when he heard of this. He had loved Ahithophel as a friend, and respected him as a counsellor, and had undoubtedly shown him much kindness. To be thus ungratefully deserted, in his old age, by one whom he had trusted, deeply wounded the heart of David. He expressed his feelings in the following lines—“ For it was not an enemy that reproached me ; then I could have borne it : neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me ; then I would have hid myself from him : but it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance.

We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company.”

David knew that if Absalom was left to himself, and the rash counsels of the young men who were with him, he might not act prudently. But Ahithophel's advice and influence would, perhaps, help him to conquer his father, and establish himself in the kingdom. But David put his trust in God. His prayer was, O Lord, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness. When David reached the top of the mount of Olives, where he worshipped God, he was overtaken by one of his counsellors, whose name was Hushai, a citizen of Archi, a town of Ephraim. Hushai had rent his clothes, and thrown earth upon his head—the common way among the Hebrews of showing sorrow. He meant to accompany David in his exile from Jerusalem. But

David forbade this. As Hushai was a wise man, David told him to go back to Absalom, mingle among his counsellors, and endeavour to prevent Ahithophel's advice from being followed. Hushai returned to the city, and found the advice of Ahithophel to be, to pursue at once the small wearied company of David with twelve thousand chosen men; and thus speedily to end the civil war.

If Absalom had followed this advice, he would certainly have succeeded. But he asked the opinion of Hushai, who had just come from the camp of his father. Hushai said, the counsel of Ahithophel was not good, because that David and his men were now in the highest state of rage and despair, and, having retreated to some cave, they would fight like a bear robbed of her whelps; and that if a few of Absalom's men should be killed at

this time, it would cause a report that he was conquered, and discourage the people from acknowledging him as king. Hushai, to flatter the foolish vanity of the prince, advised him to wait till he could gather together all the men of Israel, and go with a great multitude to attack his father. And if king David should be found in a city, the whole army of Absalom might carry ropes, and draw the city into the river, till there was not one stone left. This advice Absalom was so foolish as to prefer to the counsel of Ahithophel; for the Lord had determined to save the life of David, and bring ruin upon Absalom. Hushai now wished to inform David of Absalom's plans, and urge him to flee over Jordan that night. He employed Jonathan and Ahimaaz, the sons of Zadok and Abiathar, priests of God. They were lads in whom he could trust, for they feared God, and were brave

enough to go on this dangerous errand. By means of a young woman the message was given to the lads. A boy saw them, however, and told Absalom, who caused them to be followed. They fled to the house of a faithful friend of David, whose wife hid them in a well that was in the court. She put a covering over the well, and spread corn upon it as if to dry. The soldiers of Absalom could not find them, and returned. The lads escaped from the well, and went on their dangerous journey to the camp of David, and told him all that had happened. David and his men hastened to pass over the Jordan, and when the morning dawned, not one of them was left on the western side of the river.

After a long and weary march they came to Mahanaim in Gilead. This was not very far from Jabesh-Gilead, where Saul and Jonathan were buried. As soon

as David arrived, some of the rich men in the neighbourhood, remembering Saul's kindness to them, came and brought provisions for himself and his army. One of these was an old man of Gilead, named Barzillai. Here, among the balsam groves of Gilead, near the foot of mount Hermon, David wrote the following beautiful lines. As he watched the deer coming from different parts of the land to drink of the pure springs that gushed out from the sides of the mountains, he compared the thirst which they felt, to his own longing desire to return to Jerusalem.

As the hart panteth after the water brooks,
So panteth my soul after thee, O God !
My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God ;
When shall I come, and appear before God ?
My tears have been my meat day and night,
While they continually say unto me, Where is thy
God ?

When I remember these things, I pour out my soul
in me ;

For I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God.

With the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holy day.

Why art thou cast down, O my soul ?

And why art thou disquieted in me !

Hope thou in God ;

For I shall yet praise him,

For the help of his countenance.

Several other Psalms are supposed to have been written at the same time.

Ahithophel was angry and mortified that his wise counsel was rejected, and the foolish advice of Hushai followed. He foresaw that Absalom would not succeed, and he could expect no favour to himself, if David was restored to his city and kingdom. Thus disappointed of all his ambitious hopes, he went to his house at Giloh, and hanged himself.

Soon after this, a battle was fought between Absalom's soldiers, and the soldiers of David, in the wood of Ephraim, near

Mahanaim. Absalom commanded his troops himself: but David's men would not suffer their king to go out with them. They feared that he would be killed, and that the Israelites would be left without any suitable person to govern them. Three generals commanded David's army, Joab, and Abishai, and Ittai. David stood by the gate of the city, and examined his troops as they marched out in companies before him. When they were ready to depart, David spoke to his three generals in the hearing of the whole army, and told them, for his sake, to deal gently with his son Absalom. The people then went to the wood of Ephraim to meet Absalom, and very soon gained a great victory over him and his men. Twenty thousand of Absalom's men were killed.

As Absalom was riding on a mule, he passed under an oak, and the branches of

the oak caught him up by his head, and he was left hanging in the air. Joab heard where he was, and notwithstanding the commands of David, went and killed him. Then Joab blew a trumpet to call the people together, and sent a messenger to tell David the news.

Ahimaaz, one of the young men who had carried the message from Hushai, begged Joab to let him go and inform David of the victory. Joab refused at first, not liking to make him the bearer of such painful news to David, as the death of his son; but as Ahimaaz was urgent in his request, Joab at last suffered him to go. Ahimaaz ran swiftly along the road, and outran the other messenger. Finding David sitting at the gate of the city, he told him that Joab had gained a victory. The king said, "is the young man Absalom safe?"

Ahimaaz answered, that he had seen a

good deal of confusion among the officers and soldiers, but did not know the cause. The other messenger soon came up, and David heard of the death of Absalom. He was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept: and as he went, he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

The joy which the people felt at gaining a victory, was quickly turned into mourning, when they heard how much David was grieved at the death of Absalom. They returned silently into the city, as if they were ashamed, while the king lamented aloud, O Absalom, my son, my son!

Joab went in to see the king, and told him that if he mourned so much for one who was his enemy, and treated his friends with so much neglect, it would not be strange if his people should leave him, and

choose some one else to be their king. He urged the king to go down to the gate, and see the people who had come in from the battle. The king complied, and took his seat at the gate, where he received the visits of his officers and soldiers.

David sent a kind address to the people of the tribe of Judah, and they all invited him to return to Jerusalem, and be again king over Israel. They came to Gilgal to meet him, and he went with them over the Jordan. On his way to Jerusalem, he was met by Shimei, who had insulted and abused him when he fled from Absalom. Shimei confessed his sin, and entreated David to forgive him. Abishai advised that Shimei should be slain; but David said that no man should be put to death on the day that he was restored to his kingdom. He promised Shimei that he should receive no injury.



A very affecting scene took place after David had crossed the river Jordan. It was the parting of the king with his friend Barzillai, the Gileadite. He had provided for the king and his soldiers all that they needed, when they were at Mahanaim. Though he was eighty years old, he had come thus far with David on his journey.

“And the king said unto Barzillai, come

thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem. And Barzillai said unto the king, How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem? I am this day fourscore years old: and can I discern between good and evil? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing-men and singing women? wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king? Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan with the king: and why should the king recompense it me with such a reward? Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in mine own city, and be buried by the grave of my father and of my mother: but behold thy servant, Chimham; let him go over with my lord the king, and do to him what shall seem good unto thee. And the king answered, Chimham

shall go over with me, and I will do to him that which shall seem good unto thee : and whatsoever thou shalt require of me, that will I do for thee.”

CHAPTER XXIV.

Solomon chosen to be King after David.

DAVID lived to be seventy years old, and if several of his children had not been ungrateful and disobedient, he would have been very happy. But these trials helped to make him humble and submissive ; and amidst all his sorrows he loved and praised God.

God told David that his son Solomon must be king after he was dead. But Adonijah, David's eldest son, was displeased that his younger brother should be preferred before himself. So when David was

old and unable to go out, Adonijah invited all his brothers except Solomon, with Joab and Abiathar, and many of the chief men, to a feast. There they attempted to make Adonijah king; but the people would not acknowledge any one as king, until they knew whom David had chosen for his successor. When David heard what was passing, he commanded Benaiah, the captain of his guards, and Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, to take Solomon into a public place in the city, and there anoint him as king. They did so, and all the people shouted with great joy, "God save king Solomon." It was now understood that Solomon reigned with his father, and that he would build a temple when David was dead. David employed himself during the latter part of his life in collecting together such things as would be wanting for the temple. He laid aside gold and silver, and

iron, and brass, and wood, and precious stones in abundance.

Shortly before his death he called together the people, and told them how many things he had prepared. As Solomon was young and tender, and it was a great work to build the temple, he requested them to give what materials they could spare for the purpose. The people came forward willingly, and brought large gifts, which were carefully laid up till Solomon was ready to build the temple. Then David thanked and blessed God, and all the people rejoiced. Probably the seventy-second Psalm was sung at this time.

Give the king thy judgments, O God,
And thy righteousness unto the king's son :
He shall judge thy people with righteousness,
And thy poor with judgment.

The mountains shall declare peace to the people,
And the hills announce righteousness.

They shall fear thee, as long as the sun and moon
endure,

Throughout all generations.

He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass,
As showers that water the earth.

In his days shall the righteous flourish,
And abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth.

He shall have dominion from sea to sea,
From the river to the ends of the earth.

They that dwell in the desert shall bow before him,
And his enemies shall lick the dust.

The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring
presents ;

The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts,
All kings shall fall down before him :

All nations shall serve him.

A handful of corn, scattered in the earth on the top
of the mountains

Shall wave its fruit like the trees of Lebanon :

And the peopled cities shall flourish like grass of the
earth.

His name shall endure for ever ;

His name shall be continued as long as the sun.

Men shall be blessed in him ;

All nations shall call him blessed !

David said to all the congregation, " now
bless the Lord your God." And all the
congregation blessed the Lord God of their

fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped, and offered sacrifices.

This was the last public act of King David. Soon after, feeling himself to be dying, he called Solomon, and charged him to do his duty to God and his people. Then he offered another of his sweet songs of praise to God, and sunk back and died. He was buried on mount Zion, and all the people of Israel mourned as for a father. David had reigned forty years ; seven years at Hebron, and thirty-three as king over all Israel.

CHAPTER XXV.

David's character.

HAVING now related many of the most remarkable things in the life of David. Let us stop and recollect a little, and try

to judge about his character. When we read the lives of great men, we wish to know how far they are good, that we may strive to imitate their virtues, and how far they are not good, that we may avoid their faults. David sometimes did wrong, as you have already learned. But he loved God, and served him, and usually obeyed him. He was an uncommonly great and good man. Our minds would become confused if we were to try to recollect all parts of his character at once; so we will think of him first, in one situation, and then in another, and then in another, till we have gone through with the whole. We will think of David as a youth, as a warrior, as a king, and as a poet.

First, we will think of David as a youth. It is delightful to look at him when he was a child, and a young man; and here we can find some things to imitate. He was obe-

dient to his parents. It is said that only those who know how to obey, know how to govern. David knew how to obey. He had studied the command, "Honour thy father and thy mother," and knew that it came from God. At his father's command he left the pleasant company in Bethlehem, and went alone into the fields to take care of the sheep. When his father sent for him to come and see Samuel, he came immediately, though he did not expect that Samuel would promise him a kingdom. Afterwards, when David was driven about by Saul, and could not find a safe place for his father and mother in his country, he went with them to the king of Moab, and requested him to take care of them. He was more anxious for them than for himself. He was faithful to his parents when they were absent and could not see what he did. He carefully watched over their

sheep, and led them to the best pastures and the clearest waters. He exposed himself to great dangers, by fighting with a lion and a bear, to save his father's flock. He was not like those children and young persons who neglect their duty, as soon as they are out of sight of their parents or guardians.

There was another thing in which David set a good example. He diligently made the best use of his time, and all his advantages. Now we must recollect that his advantages were small, compared with those which children at present enjoy. True, he had good parents to teach him out of the law which God gave to Moses. He was taught to read this law. Besides this, he probably had but few books, except a book of songs or poems, and perhaps a few books on history.

Yet he became a fine poet, and the best

musician in the country, before he was twenty years old.—How did he do this ? I will tell you. He carefully applied himself to study, and made good use of all the opportunities that he had for gaining knowledge. He became perfectly acquainted with the history of the Hebrews, from the time of Abraham their ancestor. All their wars, and the many changes in their circumstances, and especially their wanderings in the wilderness, before they settled in Palestine, were as well known to him as the streets and people of Bethlehem. He also learned from the first book of Moses, the whole history of the world before the time of Abraham. He probably read the book of songs, which contained a number of Hebrew poems. Now, though a person may read many books in a hasty, careless way, and know but little when he has done, yet David learned a great deal by

closely studying his little library. He learned many things which he wrote out into poetry, and many things which afterwards helped him to govern his people well. This is not all. While many children of the same age were at play, and trifling away their time, David was alone with his sheep among the hills of Judah. He had the whole care of his father's flock. Such important business made him sober and thoughtful. Besides, he was in a beautiful country, and watched all the different appearances around him. He saw the sun shining in his strength, and the moon walking in her brightness! He saw the high mountains, and green valleys, and the sweet flowers, and the tall trees, and the sportive animals; and in his verses he called upon them all to praise God. He saw the storms which, in that country, gather in dark clouds upon the hills, and suddenly

pour themselves down in rain, and thunder, and lightning upon the valleys. As he fled with his flocks to some neighbouring shelter, he worshipped God, who came in the whirlwind and the storm. He remembered these scenes, and used sweetly to describe them many years afterwards, when he was writing poetry in his palace at Jerusalem. David improved himself in music by singing his songs, and practising on different instruments. And during his solitary hours, he thought much, and seriously, of God, his character, and works, and the way in which he governed the world. In this manner he gained great strength of mind, and became much more judicious and manly than others of his age. So it is with persons who are very excellent. If you read the histories of great kings, or great generals, or great writers, you will find that they all improved their

time when they were young. They studied hard, and thought a good deal, and carefully noticed what was going on around them.

When David was young, he had an amiable engaging temper. He showed this in his obliging, affectionate conduct towards his parents. He showed it by his kindness to his brothers. While they were in the camp of Saul, at Elah, he went several miles early one morning, to inquire after their health, and carry them a present. And when his eldest brother reproached him, he did not return angry words, but gave a mild and pleasant answer. He gained favour with all his acquaintances. The servants of Saul spoke well of him to their master, when they recommended him as a musician to play before the king. After he came to Gibeah, he was beloved by Jonathan, and by the king's servants, and

by all the people. He had a sweet temper and amiable manners.

I have one thing more to say of David, when he was a youth, and this is the most important thing of all. He was pious. While he was young and active, with a bright bloom on his cheek, and pleasant thoughts in his mind, he chose God for his best friend. He began to love and obey him, and determined to do so as long as he lived. This prepared him for all the changes of his whole life. Whenever he was in trouble, he prayed to God to help him; and if God did not immediately help him, he was patient and submissive. When he was happy, he thanked and praised God, and called upon all around him to do the same. Sometimes he could not judge what it was his duty to do; then he made the High Priest put on the Urim and Thummim, and asked God to direct

him. At all times he trusted in God as his protector and friend, for he had begun to do so when he was young. After he became an old man, he said to God in one of his Psalms, "Thou art my trust, from my youth."—"O God, thou hast taught me from my youth, and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. Now, also, when I am old and gray headed, O God, forsake me not."

When at any time he was overcome by temptation, his piety caused him to confess his sins, and be sorry for them, and be more on his guard afterwards. His piety helped him to set a good example to his people, and to do them much good. I hope all of you will imitate David in this respect. Love and serve God while you are young. Then you will be useful and happy through life.

We will next think of David as a war-

rior. In early youth he showed much courage in killing a lion and a bear, and afterwards in fighting with the giant. While he was at the court of Saul, he was often employed to command soldiers, who were sent to fight the Philistines. He had many opportunities of learning how to command an army, and to conquer his enemies. At the time he was chosen king, the Israelites were in a distressed situation. They had been so often conquered by the Philistines and other nations around them, that they were in constant fear of being attacked. There had also been a long civil war, or a war between the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, who had chosen David king, and the other tribes of Israel, who had chosen Ishbosheth king. This war was closed by the death of Ishbosheth. David began his reign by making preparations to defend his country. There had been no re-

gular army before. In time of peace the Israelites were scattered about on their farms; and when any neighbouring nation declared war against them, they were collected together into an army, and sent out to fight. But sometimes their enemies did not declare war, but came suddenly into the country, without giving the Hebrews any warning. When a company of armed men came in this way into Palestine, they had time to kill many people, and carry off much property before the Israelites could leave their farms and put on their armour, and come together to drive them away. As the people in all the countries around were disposed to injure the Israelites, David determined to keep an army of men at Jerusalem, in constant readiness to fight. Such an army would now be called a standing army. Almost all kings have standing armies.

This army of two hundred and eighty-eight thousand men was divided into twelve parts or divisions. One division of twenty-four thousand men was kept at Jerusalem one month, constantly prepared to fight. The next month these men were permitted to go home, and twenty-four thousand more came in to supply their places, and so on through the whole year. The enemies of the Israelites were now afraid to come into the country because it was defended by so large an army. David also appointed a guard of soldiers called Cherethites and Pelethites, to be constantly about himself, to accompany him when he went out, and protect him from danger. He formed a company of officers called mighty men. No person could be a member of this company till he had performed some very brave action. The hope of obtaining this honour made the soldiers courageous.

There were other ways in which David showed himself to be a great general. He did not wait for his enemies to come and fight with him in Palestine. If he had done so, he would have exposed his country to be continually trodden down and destroyed by armies, as it had often been before. He went with his soldiers into the different countries around, until he had conquered them all. Thus, though there were many wars during the reign of David, the Israelites who remained at home had peace and quietness. Every body was afraid to disturb them. It is commonly wicked for men to fight and kill each other, but it was not wicked for David to go to war, because God had commanded him to defend his country against the idolatrous nations who wished to destroy the Israelites, and the worship of the true God. David tells us in one of his Psalms, that God taught him to

fight. “Blessed be the Lord my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight.”

As a king, it was David's first wisdom to govern the people according to the commands of God. He acted wisely, and constantly endeavoured to make his people good and happy. By conquering so many nations he made the country of the Israelites very large. It reached to the Euphrates on the east, to the Red sea on the south, and to Phœnicia, a rich trading country, on the north-west. Knowing that they were now in no danger of being robbed and oppressed by their heathen neighbours, the Israelites went on cheerfully with their usual employment. By cultivating their land and manufacturing useful articles, and trading with different countries, they became rich. David was careful to appoint good judges, so that no

man could unjustly take away his neighbour's property. It is supposed that David sent out ships from some of the towns on the Red sea to India. These ships carried the things that grew, or were made in Palestine, and brought back gold, and silver, and precious stones, and many other valuable things. King David wore a purple robe, with a crown of gold on his head. He sat on a throne, and carried in his hand a sceptre, an ornamented staff, that was only used by kings. He probably had a splendid court at Jerusalem. The great officers of a king, and the lords and ladies who live in his palace, or often come there, are called his court. David had many great men about him. There were his sons, and many of the princes of the different tribes, and the men who advised him about governing the country. There were several prophets, and the high priest, and other

priests, and a multitude of Levites, who were the most learned men among the Hebrews. There were the guards who stood around the palace of the king, and accompanied him when he walked or rode out. A number of poets and historians lived at Jerusalem. Many of these people dined every day with the king.

I have said that David did much to make his people good and happy. The best thing that he did, was to cause that God should be constantly worshipped on mount Zion. It was one of the first acts of his reign, to place the ark in the tabernacle, in the presence of all the people. He collected together the priests and Levites, and commanded them to offer sacrifices morning and evening. Before this, there was no music in the Hebrew worship. David appointed many companies of Levites to take their turns in singing praises to God before

the tabernacle. He wrote many beautiful hymns for them to sing. This made the worship very solemn and interesting. He wrote songs for the people to sing when they came to Jerusalem three times a year, to the feast of the passover, and the feast of pentecost, and the feast of tabernacles. He wished to make them a religious people. His poems were probably sung in all the houses and cottages in Israel. He was so anxious that God should be worshipped aright, that he spent much of his life in making preparations for the building of a temple, which should be very grand and convenient.

David had great riches. But he did not obtain and lay up those riches for his own use. No, it was for the temple of God, which his son was to build. For building and ornamenting this temple, he laid by heaps of gold, and silver, and precious

stones, and metals, and fragrant and beautiful wood. He intended the house of God should be as splendid as possible, that the people might love to come up to it. There they could learn much about God, and their duty. There they could become acquainted with each other, and attached to each other. The nation became more populous, and rich, and happy, under the long government of David, than it ever was before. And when he died, he left his son Solomon the richest and most powerful king in all that part of Asia.

We will now say a few words about David as a poet. We have learned that he wrote many beautiful Psalms, and that he was the first person who wrote poems to be sung at the worship of God. He invented a new kind of poetry, which had more gentleness and sweetness in it, more of pious joy and gratitude, than any that the

Hebrews were acquainted with before. His Psalms have always been admired, and for nearly three thousand years have been sung in almost all meetings for prayer and praise to God. They have been translated into almost every written language, and his poems are more beautiful than any that are to be found out of the Bible. He is known all over the world as the sweet singer of Israel, whether in strains of gladness or melancholy, of triumph, or deep confession, he surpasses all other poets. Some of these songs were written to be sung at the removal of the ark. They are very joyful, and so are those which were intended to be sung by the Israelites, as they went up to Jerusalem, at the three festivals. Others are hymns which describe the character and works of God. These speak of the wonderful and terrible things that God has done,

and are very grand and solemn. Some were written when David had been guilty of great sins, and are called penitential psalms, because they show deep sorrow for his sins, and earnest desires that God would pardon him and make him holy. David wrote some of his most interesting Psalms when he was driven away from Jerusalem by his wicked son Absalom. I will conclude this chapter with one of these poems. It was probably written when Barzillai met David and his soldiers on the eastern side of Jordan, and spread a table for them in the wilderness

The Lord is my shepherd,

I shall not want ;

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures,

He leadeth me beside the still waters,

He restoreth my soul,

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness,

For his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow
of death,

I will fear no evil : for thou art with me ;
Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of
mine enemies.
Thou anointest my head with oil ; my cup runneth
over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the
days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for-
ever.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Remarks on the line of talents, and good qualities of David.

It is rare to see such a union of talents and good qualities in the same person, as was found in David. He was a brave and enterprising general. His military skill was far greater than that of others in his age. He made many improvements in the art of war.—He was probably as celebrated in

his time, for military glory, as Napoleon was a few years ago.—Some men are skillful generals, who have not talents for other things.—But David was also a fine poet, and a man of taste, as well as a bold warrior. His poetry has a sweetness and beauty at least, equal to any of a similar kind that has ever been written.—Some persons can write good poetry, but can do little else.—They have fancy, and imagination, and genius, but they have not what men call common sense. Hence they are often useless in society.—They cannot gain influence over others in active scenes. But David had an uncommon power over the minds of his friends and associates.—One example will show this.—We should not expect that a young poet and musician like David, would be able to govern such bold and daring men as composed his troops when he was persecuted by Saul.

They were a restless and desperate band. Every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him, and he became a captain over them. They were men without principle. Most of them followed David only because they thought he would finally become king, and they should get some reward. David, however, had them entirely under his command. They followed him through dangers and sufferings that few would have borne, because they respected and loved him. He overawed their turbulence. He checked their desire for plunder. He restrained their wish to kill Saul, to gratify their revenge. When their spirits were sinking, he roused them to confidence by his own courage. When he bade them advance to the combat, they instantly rushed onward. When he wished them to retreat, they in-

stantly obeyed. And when the victory was won, the harp of the poet-warrior sent forth its notes of praise and gratitude to God. David must have possessed unusual influence and talent to do all this.

Men of genius are apt to disregard method in business, and even to dislike business of every kind. But David was attentive to the concerns of his father in his childhood, and when he became king, he was attentive to all the duties which belong to a king. Whether in peace or in war, he was always busy. He governed his kingdom with uncommon wisdom and energy. Its trade, its arts, its military system, its mode of worship, all received a share of his attention. And as if this was not enough to occupy David's thoughts, he provided materials for the splendid temple to be built by Solomon.

He was also a man of unusual piety,

Men of taste often have bad principles. It is not very common to find men of much piety among great generals. And among all the kings that have ever reigned, only here and there one has been distinguished for goodness. But David was a very pious man. Though a poet, a general, and a king, he was as devoted as the most retired christian. He was penitent, humble, and heavenly minded. He loved the law of God, and he loved to meditate in it. He loved prayer, and he prayed to God seven times a day. He loved the people of God, and the altar of God was his exceeding joy. But he did not merely love to think about God, and praise God. He was not pious merely at home, and in retirement. In the court, and in the camp—when flying from persecution, and when victorious over his foes—when forming plans to subdue his enemies, and when forming plans

for the government of his own people, his heart was ever full of the love of God, and he wished to do all that God had commanded. His piety was a vigorous plant, and would grow and flourish when that of most men droops and dies. God was the portion of his soul and his joy wherever he went, and in whatever scenes he was engaged. And to obey God was the great object of his life.

CHAPTER XXVII.

History of the Memory of David.

I HAVE now given my young readers a short account of the history of David until his death. But I must not stop here. Every man may be said, in a certain sense, to live two lives on the earth; and some men, but just begin their usefulness when

they die. One of these lives is before death, the other after it. The former life is when the man himself is present, living and acting. The latter is when his example is thought of after he is dead, and his labour, and plans, and opinions, and writings, do good among those that live after him. Some men are remembered a long time. The Bible says 'The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.' And it says of Abel, 'he being dead, yet speaketh.' That is, the faith of Abel is a good example for men to follow, and will never be forgotten. Some that live but a little while do a great deal of good when they are dead. Nathan W. Dickerman died when he was about eight years old, but he will speak to a great many little boys and girls a hundred years hence. They will read how he loved to go to the Sabbath school, and how he loved to pray to God, and how he loved

the Lord Jesus Christ; and they will love to go to the Sabbath school, and to pray to God, and to seek the Saviour, just as he did. O, who would not wish to be remembered, and to do good when he is dead.

Some men are remembered when they are dead, because they knew a great deal when they were alive: such men were Lord Bacon and Sir William Jones. Others are remembered because they made useful discoveries in science: such men were Sir Isaac Newton who discovered the principle of gravitation; and the astronomer Herschel, who discovered the planet called by his name. Some men are remembered because they wrote good books when they were alive: such men were Baxter and Bunyan, and Dr. Watts, and Dr. Doddridge, and President Edwards, and Dr. Dwight. Others are remembered because they were very kind and benevolent: such a man

was Howard, who went all over Europe to visit the prisons, and to try to help those shut up in prisons. Some are remembered because they have been the friends of justice and humanity: such are Clarkson and Wilberforce in England, who spent many years in opposing the slave trade. Others are remembered because they have gone as missionaries to the heathens. Among such are Brainerd, and Swartz, and Martyn.

David was one of this class of men that are remembered a great while. He lived about three thousand years ago, but he is not yet forgotten. He is mentioned in the Bible very often after his death. I have made out a list of the places where he is thus spoken of, and put it in the appendix, that my young readers may see how often the Bible mentions David after he died. But let us examine some of these passages,

and see why David is remembered so long. It is not because he was a king merely. Many others who were kings of Israel after him, are forgotten. Neither is it because he was a *great warrior* merely. I do not recollect but one place where his bravery is mentioned after his death. That is Zechariah xii. 8. I wish my young readers to notice this particularly. The Bible does not rank military glory so high as men do. It was necessary that David should be a skilful and brave general, that he might drive the heathens out of the land which God had given to his people, or else subdue them, and keep them in subjection while they lived among the Israelites. God intended that Solomon, the son of David, should build him a temple. But Solomon could not do this unless his kingdom was at peace. So God assisted David to subdue the nations all around the bor-

ders of the Israelites, and they kept quiet while the temple was building. The Bible gives a short history of these wars, but it does not afterwards dwell on the bravery and courage, and military skill of David. You would scarcely know, from what the Bible tells of him after his death, that David was a famous warrior.

David's regard for the religious instruction of his family is once referred to in the Bible, after he was dead. Read the passage, Proverbs iv. 3, 15. Soon after Solomon had buried his father, God appeared to him in a vision, and told him he might ask what he pleased, and it should be granted. Solomon was quite young—but what do you think he asked?—Riches? No.—Long life? No.—Pleasure and amusements? No.—He asked for wisdom. Is not this singular, that a young man, and a king too, should be so sober-minded as to

choose wisdom before any thing else?— How came he to value wisdom so highly? I think I can tell you; for I believe Solomon himself has given us the reason. He says, ‘I was my father’s son, tender, and only beloved in the sight of my mother. He taught me and said unto me, let thy heart retain my words; keep my commandments and live. *Get wisdom*, get understanding; forget it not, neither decline from the words of my mouth. *Wisdom* is the principal thing: therefore *get wisdom*; and with all thy getting, get understanding. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee. A crown of glory shall she deliver to thee. Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings, and the years of thy life shall be many. I have taught thee in the way of wisdom, I have led thee in the right paths.’

Is not this advice of David to his son ex-

cellent? Solomon was not so happy in having a father who was a king, as in having a father who was a pious man.—When God gave Solomon his choice of every earthly good, Solomon remembered what his father had taught him.—‘*Get wisdom, get understanding ; wisdom is the principal thing—exalt her, and she shall promote thee—and the years of thy life shall be many.*’—So he chose wisdom, like an obedient child, and he found what his father David told him was true. For God was so pleased because Solomon followed his father’s counsels, and chose wisdom, that he granted to Solomon abundance of riches, and honours, and also length of days.

Children and youth that have pious parents can never be thankful enough for the privilege ; and like Solomon, they will always find it good to follow their coun-

sels. Parents may from this also learn how to be a blessing to their children after they are dead. One reason why so many children do not seek after wisdom is, that their parents, when alive, never tell them to get wisdom as the first thing. They told them to get money, or to get reputation and honour, rather than to get wisdom, and to choose the fear of the Lord.—We learn too from this fact, that though David had so many things to occupy his thoughts, he did not neglect the religious instruction of his family. We learn too, moreover, that the benefits which the world has derived from the wisdom and writings of Solomon, are, to a great extent, to be ascribed to the influence of David. How much good is done by faithful religious counsels!

David had been a warm and faithful friend to Hiram, king of Tyre, who loved David, and loved and aided Solomon for

his father's sake. Hiram sent men to help build the temple, out of regard to the memory of David. So David not only in his life provided a great amount of silver, and gold, and other precious things for the temple; but when he was dead, was the means of providing workmen for building it.

When Solomon had finished the temple, he brought into it "the things which David his father, had dedicated," before his death. How pleasant it must have been to Solomon, that his father had been willing to give so much to promote the worship of God! What child or youth who has any idea of Solomon's wisdom, would not rather have his father imitate David, than imitate those foolish parents, who think they shall rob their families if they give any thing for religious uses! How much are those children to be pitied, whose parents

are too covetous, though they have abundance, to do their part in supporting the worship of God !

When Solomon was old, he fell into idolatry ; but it is thought that he repented of his sins before he died, and turned unto the God of his father. He says, “train up a child in the way he should go ; when he is old he will not depart from it.” He may have been thinking of himself when he wrote this. He may have been thinking what good advice his father gave him in his childhood, and how he remembered this advice in his old age. But though Solomon sinned so much against God, and provoked him to anger, God remembered the piety of David, and did not cast Solomon entirely off. God told Solomon, that to punish him for becoming an idolater, his kingdom should all be taken away except Judah and Benjamin. Notwithstanding, in

thy days, said God, "I will not do it, for David thy father's sake." How blessed is it to have pious parents!

The Lord remembered the prayers and the piety of David, and showed mercy unto his family for many generations. Abijam, the great-grandson of David, was a bad man. Nevertheless, for David's sake, did the Lord his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem! Many years afterwards, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat reigned in Judah, and was a very wicked prince. But the Lord would not destroy Judah, for David his servant's sake. Armies and walls, and gates, and bars, could not have defended Jerusalem; but the piety of David was its shield so long after his death.

When Hezekiah, who was a good king, and a pious man, reigned in Jerusalem, the

troops of Sennacherib, king of Assyria, invaded the land. Hezekiah and his people were in great trouble. The king of Assyria had conquered many nations, and the troops of Hezekiah were too few and feeble to stand against their enemies. The Assyrians had already taken the strong cities of Judah and was about to march against Jerusalem. Hezekiah betook himself to prayer. Isaiah the prophet soon came and told him, in the name of the Lord, that the enemy should not approach Jerusalem, and that the city was safe. "For I will defend this city, saith God, to save it for my own sake, and for my servant David's sake." What a proof that the righteous have power with God, and that God remembereth the seed of the just to the thousandth generation! David had now been dead more than three hundred years. But his name, like a wall of fire, still stood

between Jerusalem and her enemies. God will defend that city and save it, for his own sake, and for his servant David's sake. Hezekiah was a very good man. In answer to his prayer God lengthened out his life, but did not defend and save Jerusalem for Hezekiah's sake. Isaiah the prophet was then alive, and an eminent saint. Yet the Lord did not defend and save Jerusalem for the sake of Isaiah, but for the sake of David. This shows that David must have been a great and good man, such as the world scarcely ever saw. The Bible calls him the man after God's own heart!

We have already seen that David wrote many psalms and hymns, and also set bands of singers to praise God in the temple. After David died, his sacred songs were used in all after ages for public worship; and by the kings of Israel who re-

stored the worship of God, the ordinances and songs of David were adopted.

David is spoken of by many of the prophets who lived long after his death. He is mentioned several times by Isaiah, who represents the Messiah as sitting on the throne of David his father. Jeremiah also mentions him. He calls the Messiah a branch of David. He even calls the Messiah, David, the king whom God would raise up. If David had not been very great, and powerful, and good, the Messiah would never have been called by his name.

It is an interesting circumstance in the memory of David, that until the time of the captivity, which was more than four hundred and fifty years, David was regarded as an example of what a good king ought to be. When a king was pious, and served the Lord, and governed his people

well, he was said to walk in the ways of David—or to do right in the sight of the Lord, like David. But when a king was wicked, and unjust, and cruel to his people, he was said not to walk in the ways of David. Thus it is said of Hezekiah, that he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David his father had done. So Josiah is said to have walked in the ways of David his father. And of Ahaz, who was a very wicked king, it is said, he did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord, like David his father. When any are long spoken of as examples of particular excellence, it shows how eminent they must have been in it. When men say of any one, ‘he is just as Aristides,’ or, ‘he is honest as Cato,’ or, ‘he is patriotic as Washington,’ it shows Aristides was famous for justice; Cato for honesty; and Washington

for patriotism. David must have been a very good king, to have been spoken of in this manner so long.

We have now come down to the time of Christ, which is reckoned to be one thousand and fifty-eight years after David was made king. This is a long time. The Jewish nation had been into captivity, and had been oppressed by the successors of Alexander, and afterwards by the Romans. But they still remembered David. When the Pharisees found fault with the disciples for plucking corn on the sabbath, because they were hungry, Christ told the Pharisees what David did in similar circumstances. David was still so much respected that the Pharisees did not venture to find any more fault, when they recollected that David's example was on the side of the disciples.

When Jesus entered into Jerusalem in

triumph, just before the close of his life, the multitude spread branches in his way, and shouted Hosanna to the son of David. Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke, each several times call Christ the son of David,—and the Jews, at that period, spake of the Messiah in the same way. Paul mentions that Jesus Christ was of the seed of David; and John calls him the root and the offspring of David, and him that hath the key of David. Peter mentions David with great respect, and says that his tomb was with the Jews until that day. He calls David a prophet. He says that David knew the Messiah would be one of his descendants, and that more than a thousand years before, he knew that Christ was to rise from the dead.

It is nearly two thousand years since

the last page in the Bible was written. But the Jews still look on David as the greatest glory of their nation, and christians regard him with great reverence. They still express their gratitude, penitence, and love in the language which David used in prayer and praise. Every Sabbath in the house of God, and every day in their families, the pious employ in their devotions the thoughts and the words of David. His psalms are yet sung in the public worship of God, as they were in the temple of old. Dr. Watts, who translated the psalms of David, is thought to have written at least one half the good sacred poetry in the English language. He probably, in studying David's poetry, caught something of his spirit, and was thus able to unite other beautiful hymns in praise of God. David was evidently designed to be the great sacred poet of the world. To fit him for this

office, God placed him in many different situations. Sometimes David was full of joy, and sometimes he was very sorrowful. Sometimes he was victorious over his enemies, and successful in his plans—and sometimes he was persecuted, and in very great danger. Sometimes he was prosperous, and at other times afflicted. In all these different circumstances David expressed his feelings in poetry, so that he made hymns suitable for almost every one, whatever his circumstances may be. When persons feel as David did, they will love to read his songs.

To estimate the present influence of David on the world, would be impossible. His influence will continue to increase. His glory is connected with that of Christ his exalted son. He will yet be known in every heathen land. Wherever the Bible goes, saints will pour forth their pious feel-

ings in the words of David, and express their gratitude to God in his songs of praise. The time will come when it may be said concerning his hymns, in his own beautiful language,

‘ Their line is gone out through all the earth,
And their words to the end of the world.’

APPENDIX.

PASSAGES IN WHICH DAVID IS MENTIONED AFTER HIS DEATH.

1 Kings, 2 : 12, 24, 26, 32, 33, 44, 45.—3 : 1, 3, 6, 7, 14.—
5 : 1, 3, 5, 7.—6 : 12.—7 : 51.—8 : 1, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 24,
25, 26, 56.—9 : 4, 5, 24.—11 : 4, 6, 12, 13, 15, 21, 24, 27,
32, 33, 34, 36, 38, 39, 43.—12 : 16, 19, 20, 26.—13 : 2.—14 :
8, 31.—15 : 3, 4, 5, 8, 11, 24.—22 : 50.

2 Kings, 8 : 19.—9 : 28.—12 : 21.—14 : 3, 20.—15 : 7, 38.—
16 : 2, 20.—17 : 21.—18 : 3.—19 : 34.—20 : 5, 6.—21 : 7.
—22 : 2.

2 Chronicles, 1 : 1, 4, 8, 9.—2 : 3, 7, 12, 14, 17.—3 : 1.—5 :
1, 2.—6 : 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 15, 16, 17, 42.—7 : 6, 10, 17, 18.—
8 : 11, 14.—9 : 31.—10 : 16, 19.—11 : 17, 18.—12 : 16.—
13 : 5, 6, 7.—14 : 1.—16 : 14.—21 : 1, 7, 20.—23 : 3, 9, 18.
—24 : 16, 25.—29 : 2, 25, 26, 27, 30.—30 : 26.—32 : 5, 30,
33.—33 : 7, 14.—34 : 2, 3.—35 : 3, 4, 15.

Ezra, 3 : 10.

Nehemiah, 12 : 24, 36, 37, 45, 46.

Psalms, 89 : 3, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 33,
35, 36, 38, 49.

Proverbs, 1 : 1.—4 : 3, 4, 5, 10, 11

Ecclesiastes, 1 : 1.

Solomon's Song, 4 : 4,

Isaiah, 7 : 2, 13.—9 : 7.—16 : 5.—22 : 22.—29 : 1.—37 : 35.
—38 : 5.—55 : 3.

Jeremiah, 13 : 13.—17 : 25.—21 : 12.—22 : 4, 30.—23 : 5.—
29 : 16.—30 : 9.—33 : 15, 17, 21, 22, 26.—36 : 30.

Ezekiel, 34 : 23, 24.—37 : 24, 25.

Hosea, 3 : 5.

Amos, 6 : 5.—9 : 11.

Zechariah, 12 : 7, 8, 10, 12.

Matthew, 1 : 6, 17.—12 : 3, 23.—15 : 22.—20 : 30, 31.—
21 : 9, 15.—22 : 42, 43, 45.

Mark.—2 : 25.—10 : 47, 48.—11 : 10.—12 : 35, 36, 37.

Luke.—1 : 27, 69.—2 : 4, 11.—3 : 31.—6 : 3, 4.—18 : 38, 39.—
20 : 41, 42, 44.

John, 7 : 42.

Acts, 2 : 25, 29, 30, 34.—4 : 25.—7 : 45, 46.—13 : 22, 23,
34, 36.—15 : 16.

Romans, 1 : 3.—4 : 6.—11 : 9.

2 Timothy, 2 : 8.

Hebrews, 4 : 7.—11 : 9.

Revelation, 3 : 7.—5 : 5.—22 : 16.

ANALYSIS OF DAVID'S JOURNEYINGS.

NOTE.—*David's journeyings, as put down in this analysis, may be traced by a dotted line upon the accompanying map, to the time of his coronation at Hebron. Then commencing at Jerusalem, with his "escape from Absalam," it may be traced through.*

	1 Samuel, ch.	ver.
David goes from Bethlehem to Gibeah,—	16	18, 21
plays before Saul, and	"	22
returns to feed his father's sheep at Beth-		
lehem.	17	15
The Philistines war against Judah,	"	1
in the valley of Elah.	"	2
David goes from Bethlehem to Elah—	"	20
kills Goliath, and	"	49

	1 Samuel, ch.	ver.
is introduced to Saul, bearing his head.	17	57
David goes to Gibeah by way of Jerusalem,		
carrying the head of Goliath,	17	54
amid the songs of the women,	18	6
by which Saul's envy is so excited,	"	9
that he attempts to kill him.	"	11
He goes against the Philistines and returns to Gibeah.	"	27
Saul seeks to kill David,	19	10
but he escapes to Samuel, at Ramah.	"	18
Saul follows him,	"	22
but David returns to Gibeah—	20	1
David plans with Jonathan—	"	1—17
goes to Bethlehem—remains three days—	"	35
returns—has an interview with Jonathan,	"	41
and then goes to Nob.	21	1
From Nob, David goes to Gath—	"	10
from Gath to Adullam—	22	35
from Adullam to Mizpeh of Moab,	"	3
and from Mizpeh, returns to the forests of Hareth.	"	5
David fights against the Philistines at Keilah,	23	3
from Keilah goes to the Wilderness of Ziph—	"	14
into the hill of Hachilah—	"	19
hence, to the plains of Maon,	"	24
and then to Engedi.	"	29
After the death of Samuel, David goes to Paran—	25	1
dwells in the tents of Kedar,	<i>Ps.</i> 120	5
then comes to the wilderness of Ziph.	1 Sam. 26	3
David returns to Gath—	27	2
dwells in Ziklag,	"	6

	1 Samuel, ch.	ver.
and goes against the Gesherites, Gezerites and Amalekites.	27	8
David goes with Achish, to Shunem,	28	4
and returns to Ziklag—	30	1
pursues Amalek to Besor—	“	9
crosses Besor—	“	10
returns to Besor,	“	21
and to Ziklag.	30	26
After the death of Saul,	2 Samuel, 1	1
David goes to Hebron,	2	3
where he reigns seven years and six months,	5	5
then removes to Jerusalem.	“	6
He goes against the Philistines at Baal-pera- zim,	“	20
also in the valley of Rephaim, from Geba to Gaza.	“	25
Goes to Gibeon to fetch the Ark,	6	4
goes against the Philistines,	8	1
“ “ Moab,	“	2
“ “ Hadadezer,	“	3
“ “ Ammon at Medeba,	10	8
“ “ the Syrians at Helam.	“	17
<i>Escape from Absalom.</i>		
David goes over Cedron and up mount Oli- vet—	15	22
comes to Bahurim—	16	5
crosses Jordan,	17	22, 23
and comes to Mahanaim.	“	24
After the death of Absalom, here passes Jor- dan,	19	31
comes to Gilgal,	“	40
and then to Jerusalem.	20	3

A T A B L E,

Showing the time when the Psalms of David were written, and the occasions on which they were probably composed; chiefly from Townsend's Bible.

Psalms.	OCCASIONS.	Before Christ
2	On the delivery of the promise by Nathan to David.	1044.
3	When David fled from Absalom.	1023.
4	do. do.	do.
5	do. do.	do.
7	When reproached by Shimei.	1023.
9	On the victory over Goliath.	1063.
11	When David was advised to flee to the mountains.	1062.
16	After the promise by Nathan to David.	1044.
17	On the murder of the priests by Doeg.	1060.
18	Close of David's last war with the Philistines.	1019.
20	After the war with the Ammonites and Syrians.	1036.
21	do. do.	do.
22	After the promise by Nathan to David.	1044.
28	Unknown, probably at the removal of the Ark.	unknown.
30	On dedicating the threshing floor of Araunah.	1017.

Psalms.	OCCASIONS.	Before Christ.
31	On David's retreat from Keilah.	1060.
32	On the pardon of David's sin in the matter of Uriah.	1034.
33	do. do.	do.
34	On leaving Gath.	1060.
35	On David's persecution by Doeg.	1060.
42	On David's flight from Absalom.	1023.
43	do. do.	do.
45	After the promise by Nathan to David.	1044
51	David's confession of his sin.	1034.
52	When persecuted by Doeg.	1060.
54	When betrayed by the Ziphites.	1059.
55	During the flight from Absalom.	1023.
56	At Gath.	1060.
57	When he fled from Saul in the cave.	1058.
58	do. do.	do.
59	When Michal let him down from a win- dow.	1061.
60	When Edom was conquered by Joab.	1040.
62	When persecuted by Absalom.	1023.
63	In the wilderness of Judah.	1058.
64	When persecuted by Saul.	1060.
68	On the first removal of the Ark.	1045.
70	During Absalom's rebellion.	1023.
91	Addressed to Solomon.	1015.
96	Removal of the Ark.	1045.
103	On the pardon of David's sin.	1034.
105	Removal of the Ark.	1045.
106	do. do.	do.
108	On the conquest of Edom.	1040.
109	David persecuted by Doeg.	1060.
110	On the promise by Nathan to David.	1044.
118	do. do.	do.

Psalms.	OCCASIONS.	Before Christ.
132	Second removal of the Ark.	1045.
133	Unknown, or perhaps at the first festival, after David was made king over all Israel.	unknown.
139	When David was made king over all Is- rael.	1048.
140	David's prayer for deliverance from Saul and Doeg.	1060.
141	David's second flight to Gath.	1055.
142	David's flight to the cave of Adullam.	1060.
143	During the revolt of Absalom.	1023.
144	Victory over Absalom.	1023.
145	Towards the close of David's life.	1015.

THE END.

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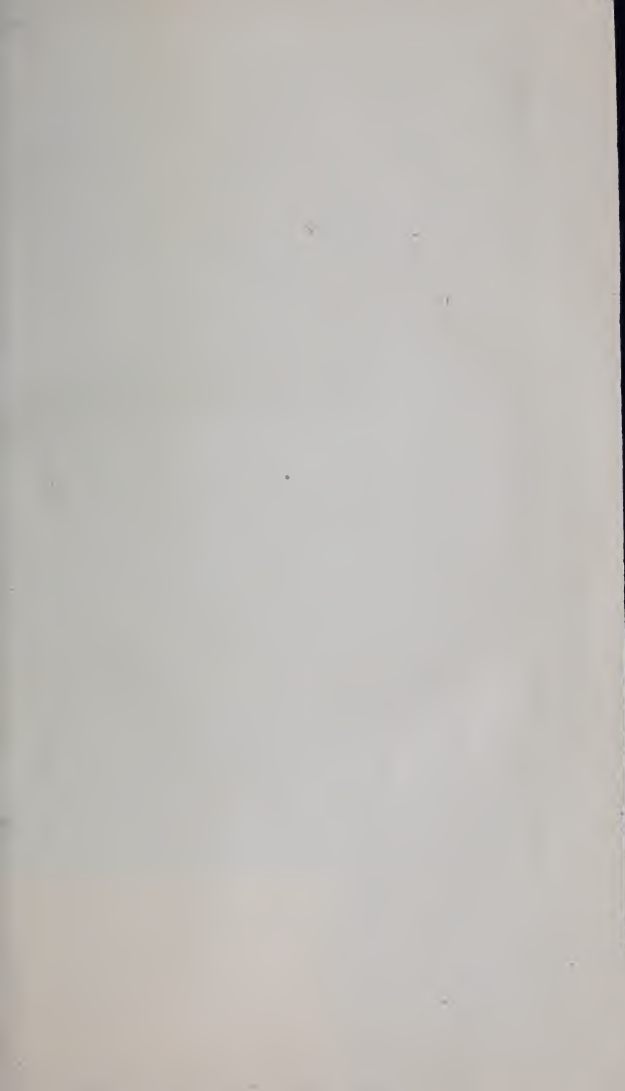
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